

STORY BY KYO SHIRODAIRA  
ART BY CHASHIBA KATASE

# IN/SPECTRE

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STORY: KYO SHIRODAIRA  
MANGA: CHASHIBA KATASE

# IN/SPECTRE

NOVEL VERSION CHARACTER DESIGNS  
HIRO KIYOHARA



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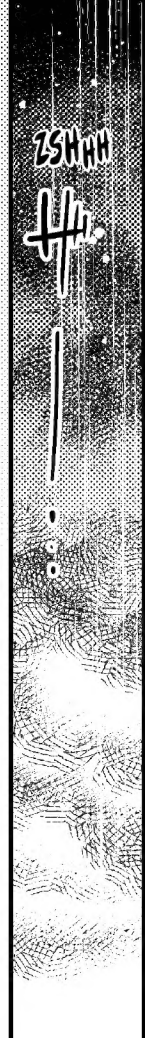
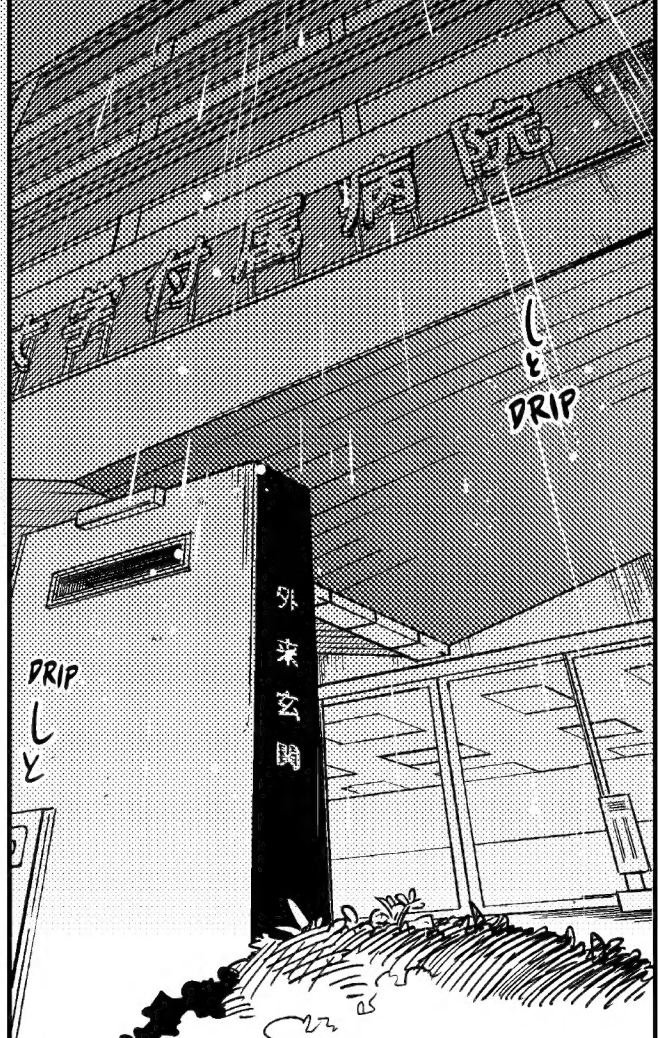






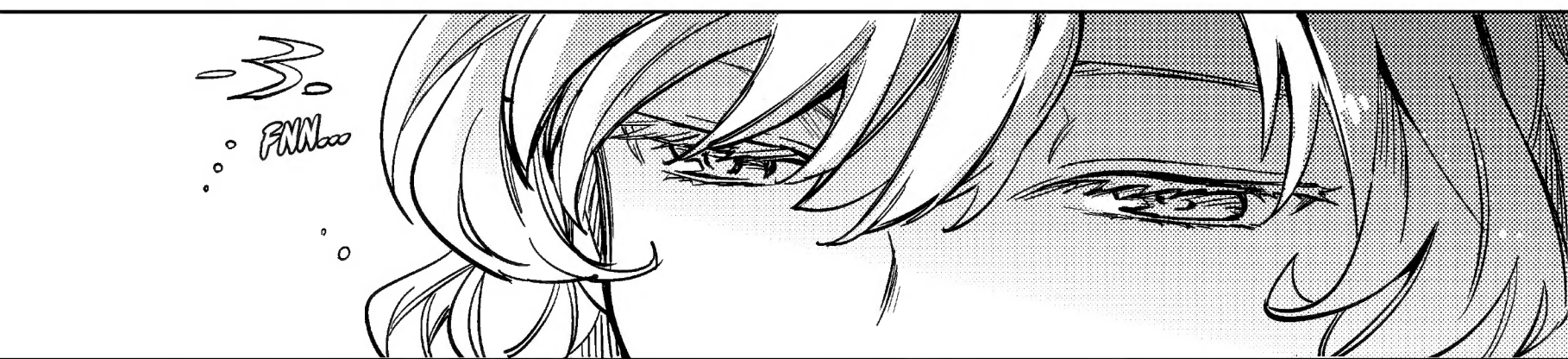
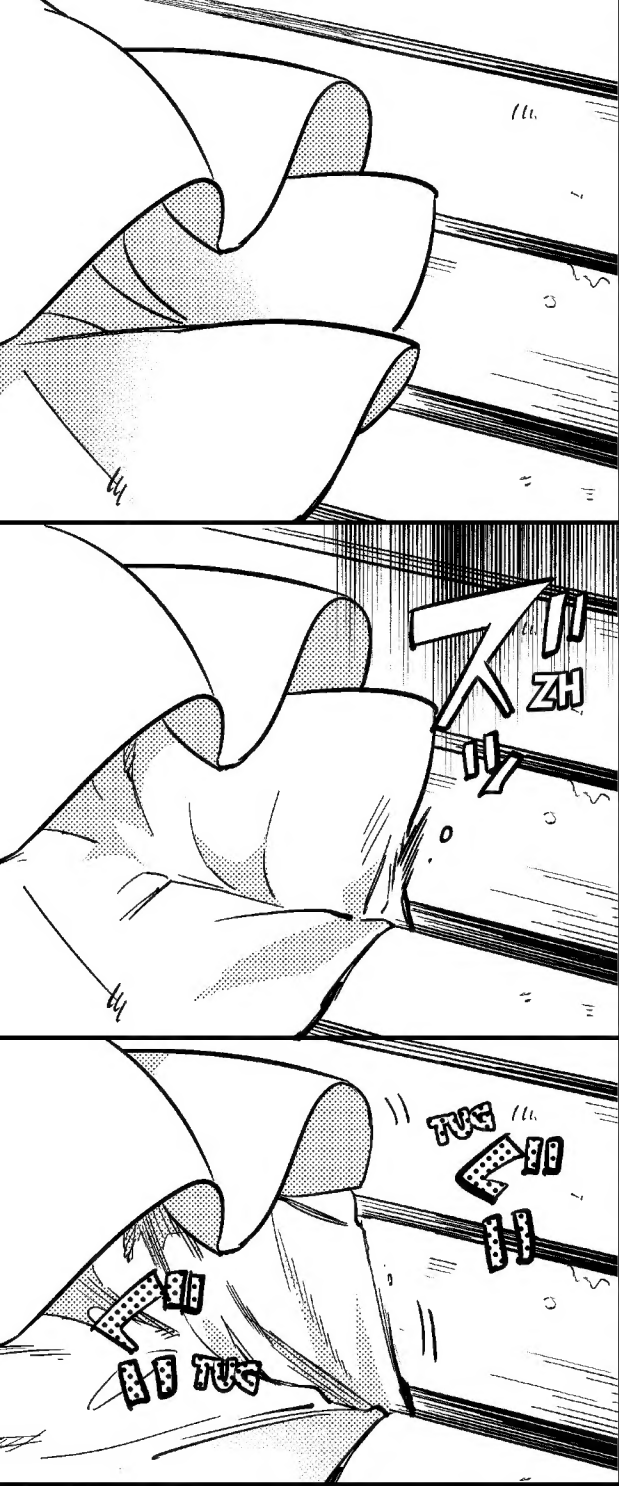
PLEASE  
BE OUR  
GOD OF  
WISDOM.

BUILDING: UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, OUTPATIENT ENTRANCE

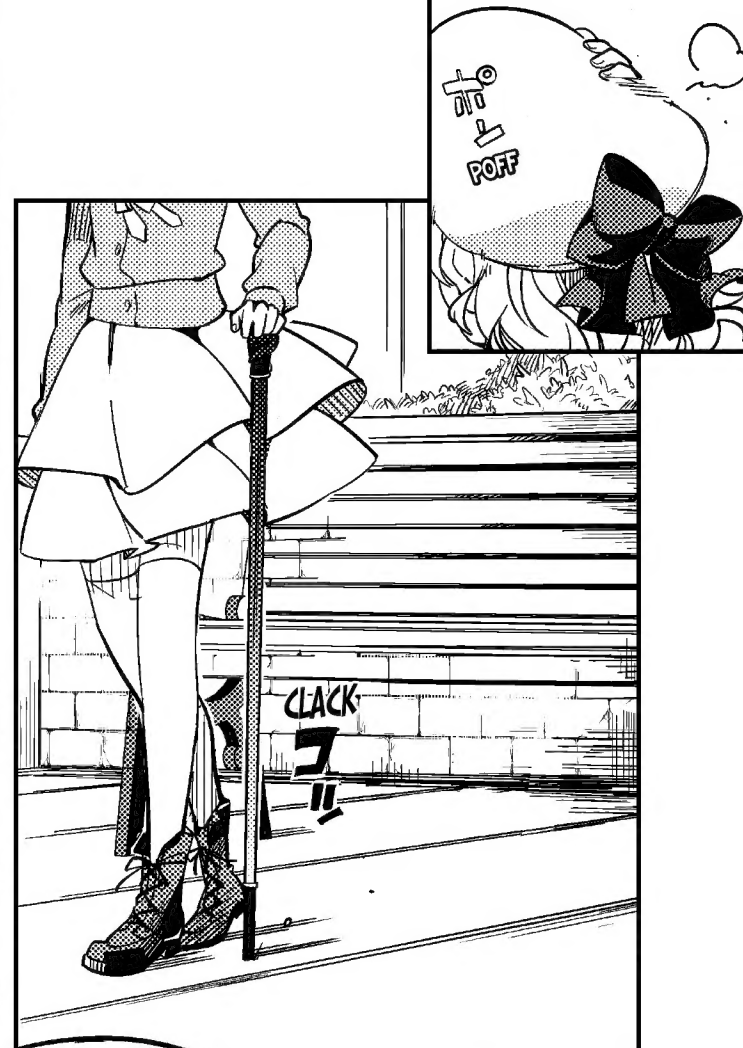
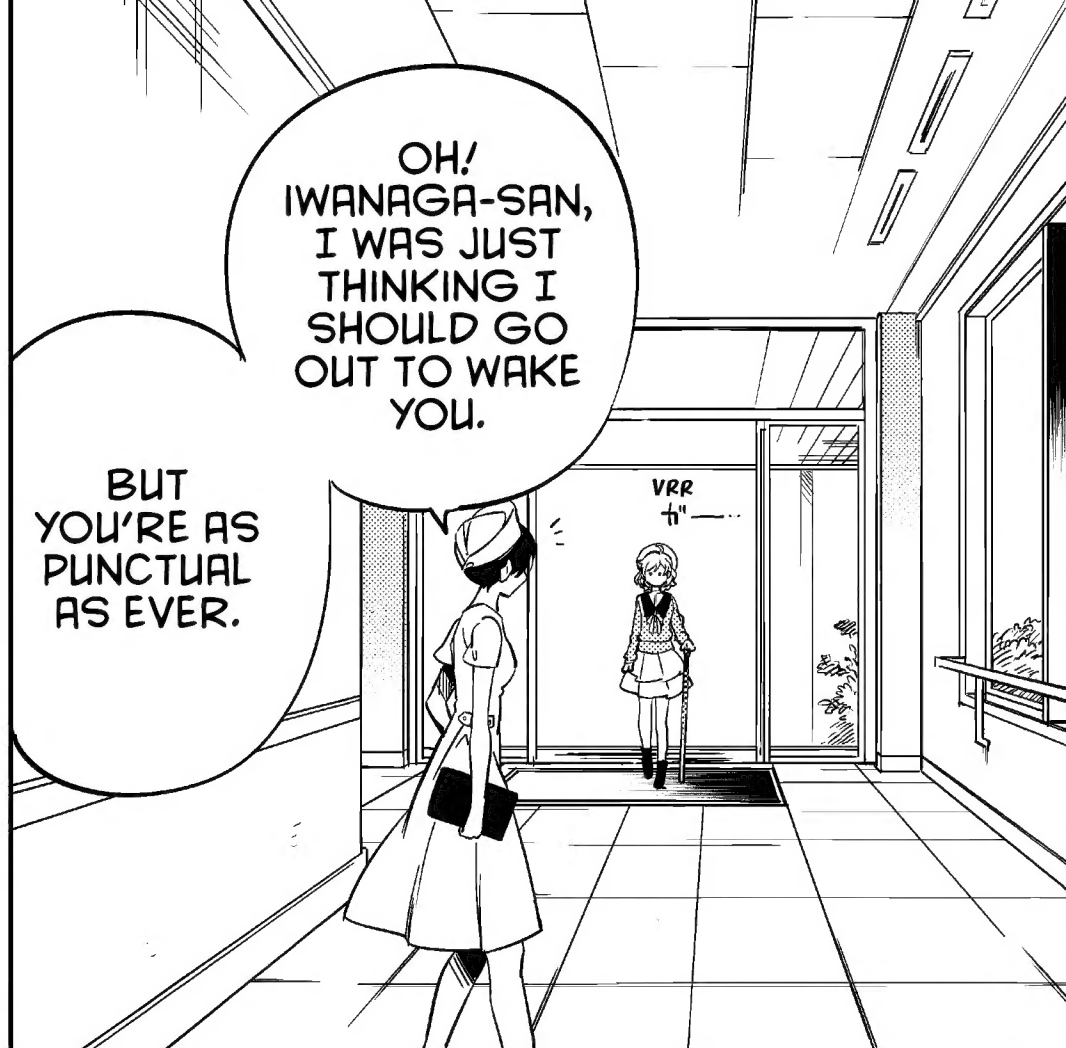


CHAPTER 1:  
"ONE EYE, ONE LEG"













IT SOUNDS  
LIKE KURÔ-  
KUN REALLY  
**DID** BREAK  
UP WITH HIS  
GIRLFRIEND.

WHISPER  
~  
~  
~



ONE  
MORE  
THING.

OH!

SHUFFLE  
す  
す  
す



I'M SORRY,  
I JUST CAN'T  
BELIEVE IT.

You're  
like a  
little  
doll.

PAT  
PAT  
PAT



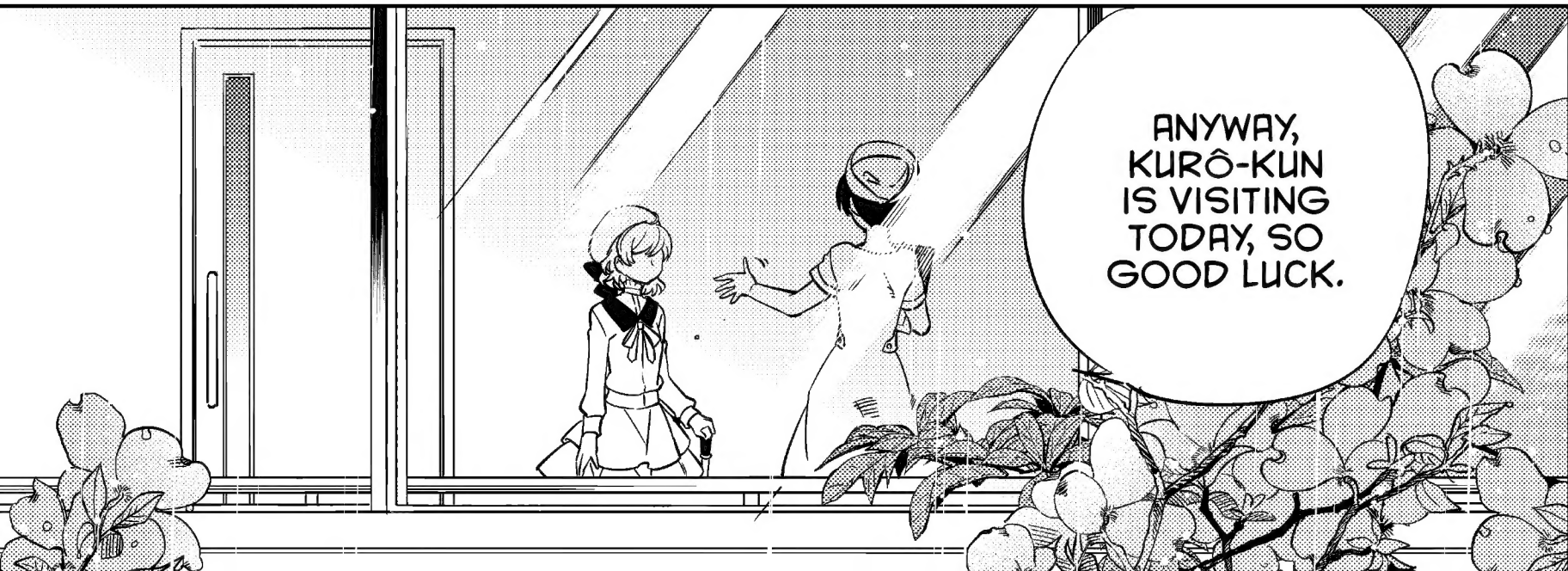
SHE'S A YEAR  
OLDER THAN HE  
IS, AND SHE'S  
GRADUATING  
COLLEGE THIS  
YEAR. SHE  
FOUND A JOB  
IN ANOTHER  
PREFECTURE.

I WONDER  
IF THAT'S  
WHY THEY'RE  
SPLITTING  
UP.



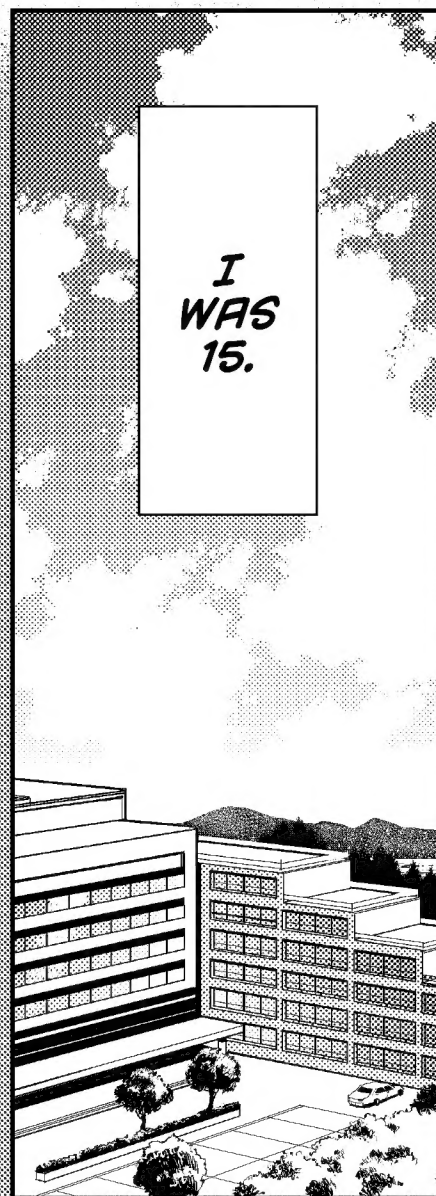
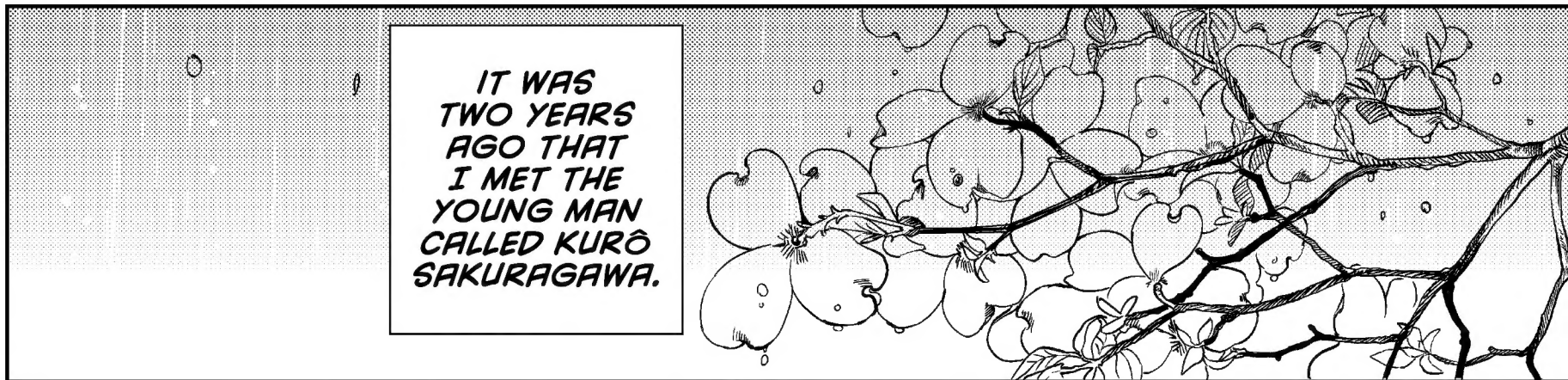
I  
COULDN'T  
GET ANY  
DETAILS,  
BUT I  
THINK IT'S  
TRUE.

REALLY?  
EVEN THOUGH  
THEY WERE  
ENGAGED?!



ANYWAY,  
KURÔ-KUN  
IS VISITING  
TODAY, SO  
GOOD LUCK.





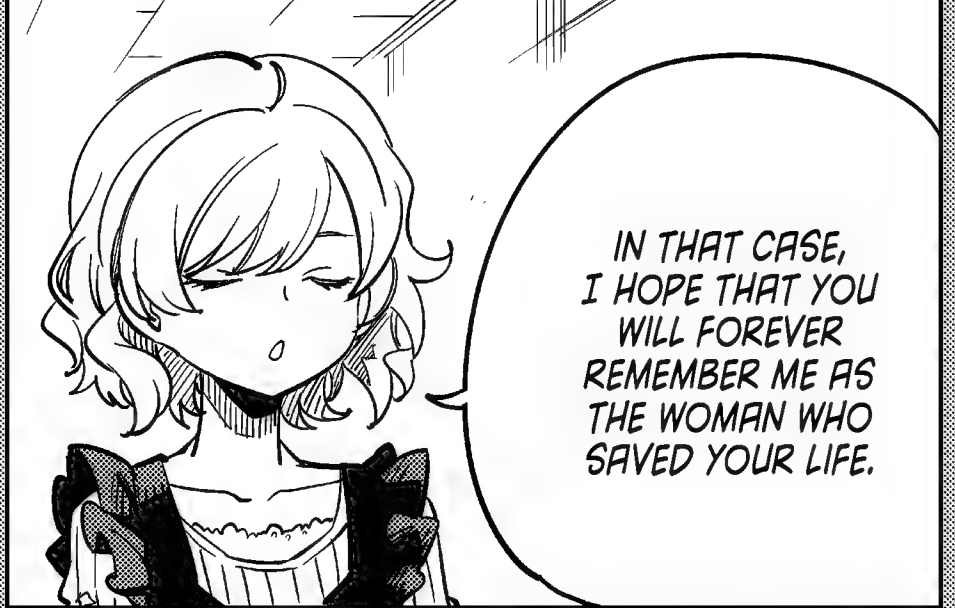










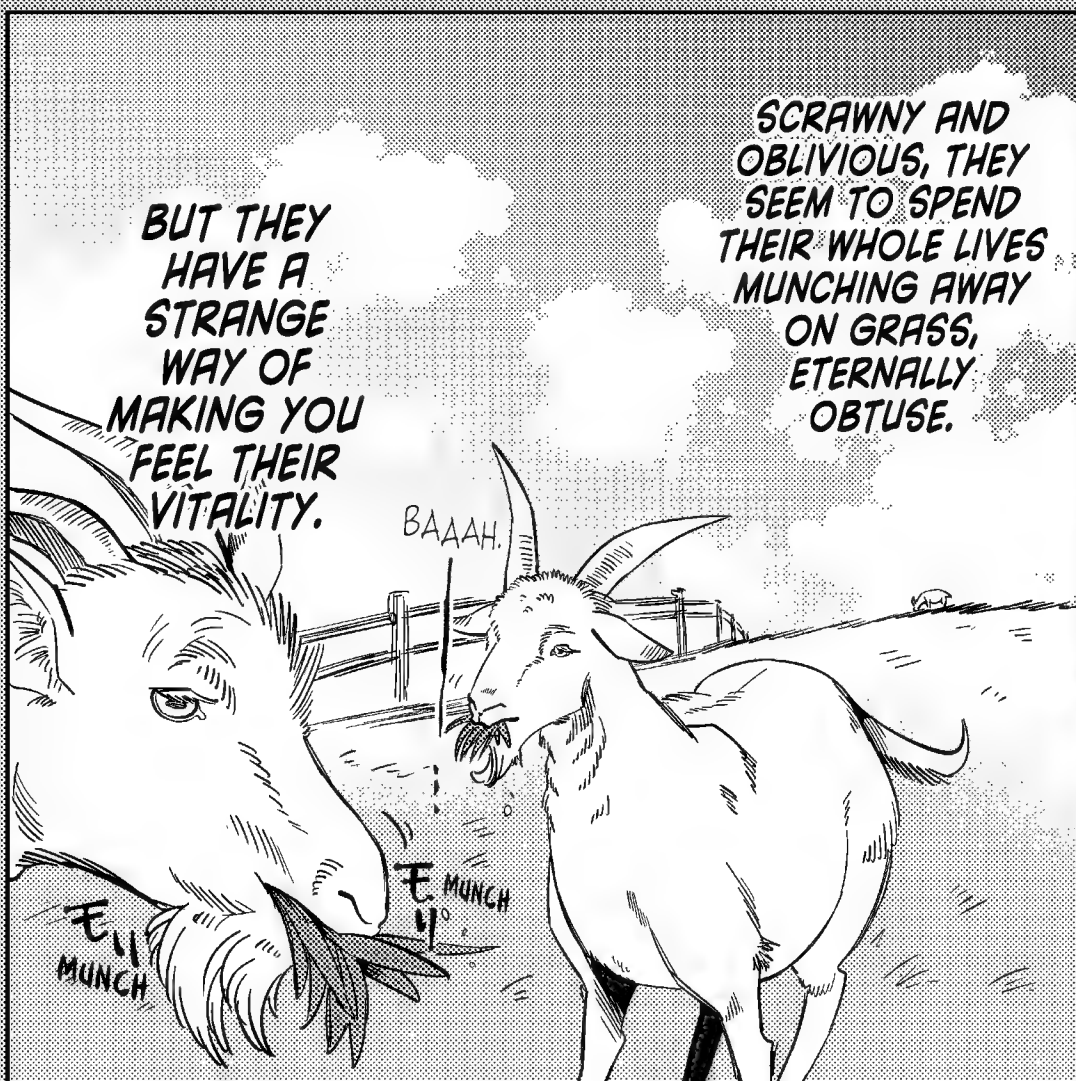






HE WAS  
20 YEARS  
OLD AT  
THE TIME.

THAT WAS  
KURŌ  
SAKURAGAWA.



BUT THEY  
HAVE A  
STRANGE  
WAY OF  
MAKING YOU  
FEEL THEIR  
VITALITY.

SCRAWNY AND  
OBLIVIOUS, THEY  
SEEM TO SPEND  
THEIR WHOLE LIVES  
MUNCHING AWAY  
ON GRASS,  
ETERNALLY  
OBTUSE.

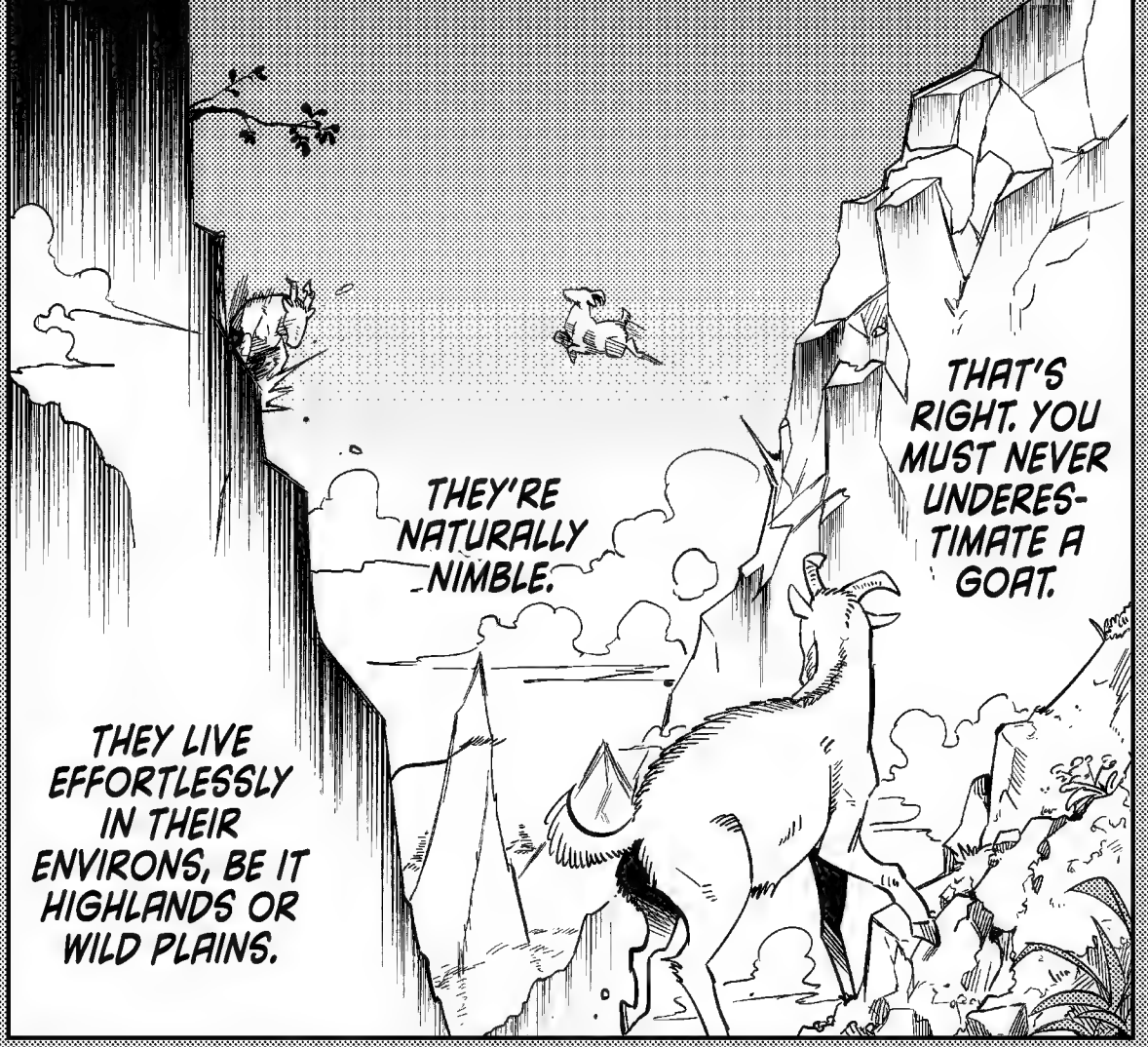


HE'S  
LIKE A  
GOAT.





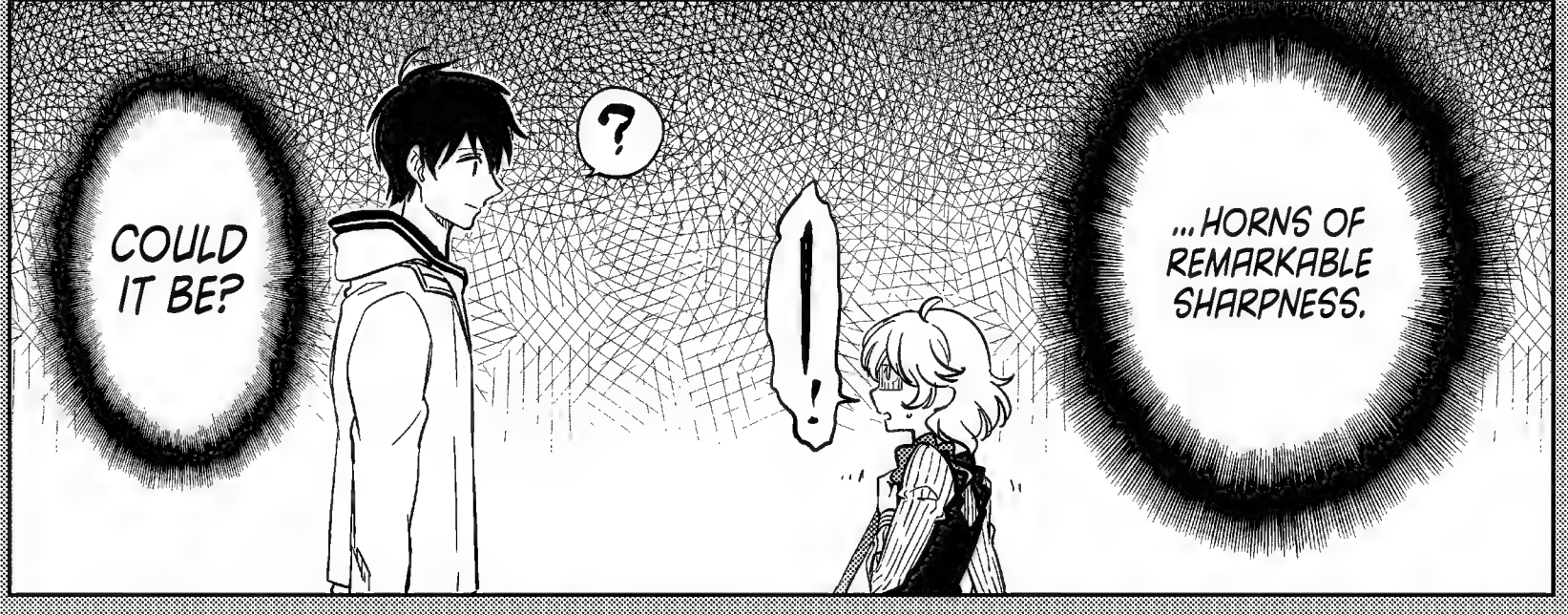
AND, SOME BREEDS OF GOAT ARE EQUIPPED WITH TWO RIGID, ONI-LIKE HORNS.



THEY'RE NATURALLY NIMBLE.

THEY LIVE EFFORTLESSLY IN THEIR ENVIRONS, BE IT HIGHLANDS OR WILD PLAINS.

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU MUST NEVER UNDERESTIMATE A GOAT.



COULD IT BE?

...HORNS OF REMARKABLE SHARPNESS.



UM...

KURÔ-KUN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU OUGHT TO BE ASHAMED.



COULD THIS BE WHAT THEY CALL "LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT"?

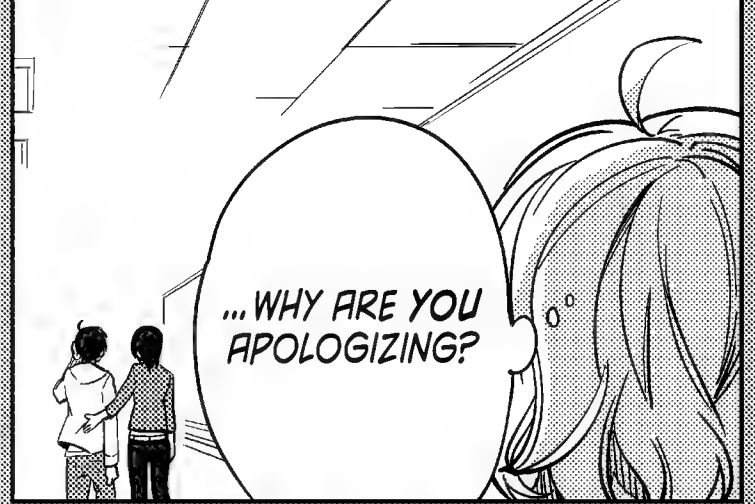




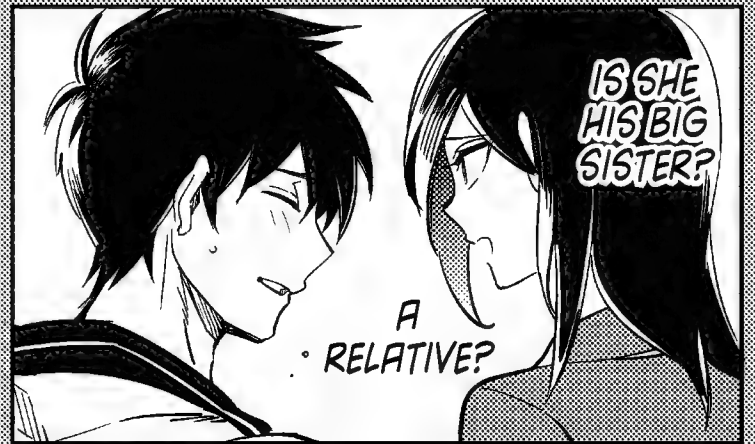




OH, IT'S  
POSSIBLE  
SHE'S HIS  
LITTLE  
SISTER...

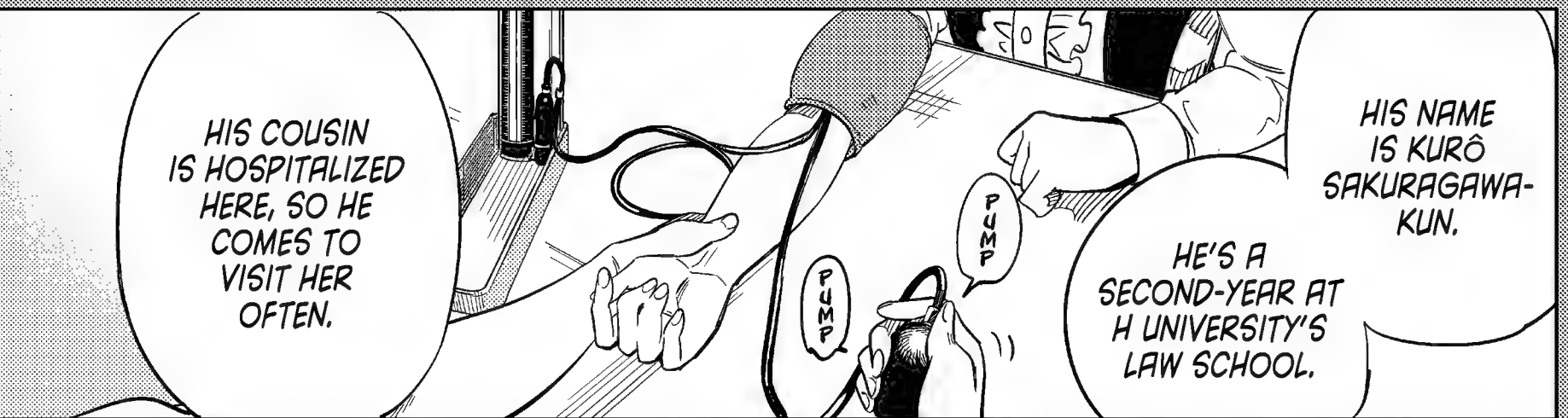


... WHY ARE YOU  
APOLOGIZING?



IS SHE  
HIS BIG  
SISTER?

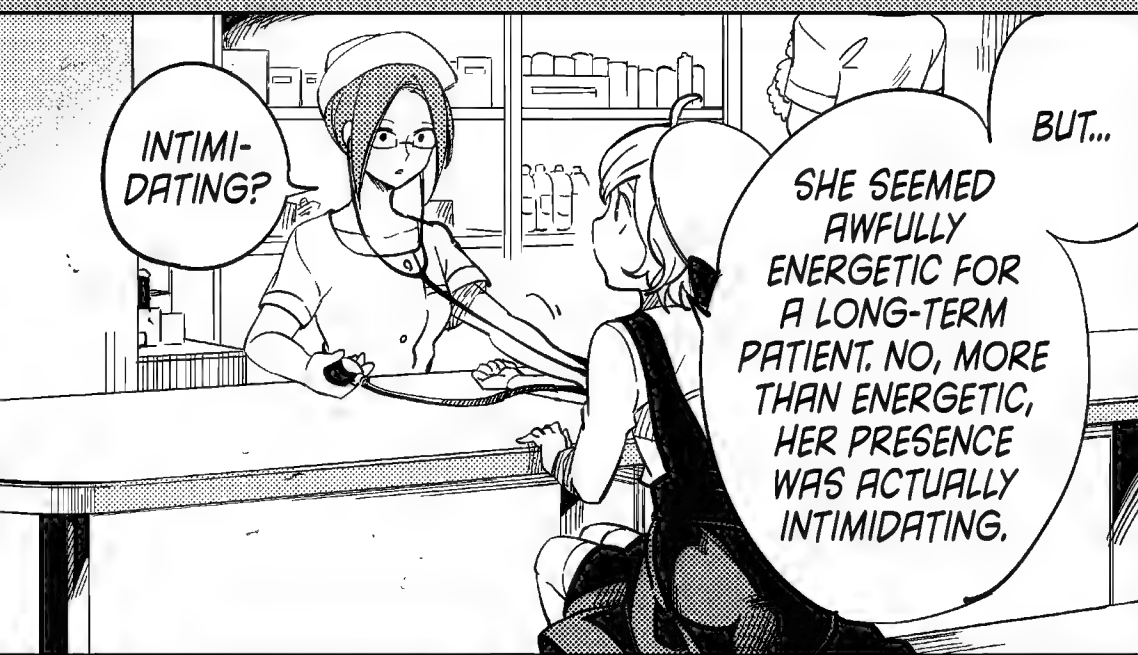
A  
RELATIVE?



HIS COUSIN  
IS HOSPITALIZED  
HERE, SO HE  
COMES TO  
VISIT HER  
OFTEN.

HIS NAME  
IS KURÔ  
SAKURAGAWA-  
KUN.

HE'S A  
SECOND-YEAR AT  
H UNIVERSITY'S  
LAW SCHOOL.



INTIMI-  
DATING?

BUT...

SHE SEEMED  
AWFULLY  
ENERGETIC FOR  
A LONG-TERM  
PATIENT. NO, MORE  
THAN ENERGETIC,  
HER PRESENCE  
WAS ACTUALLY  
INTIMIDATING.



NO, SHE'S  
NOT HIS  
COUSIN.

OH.



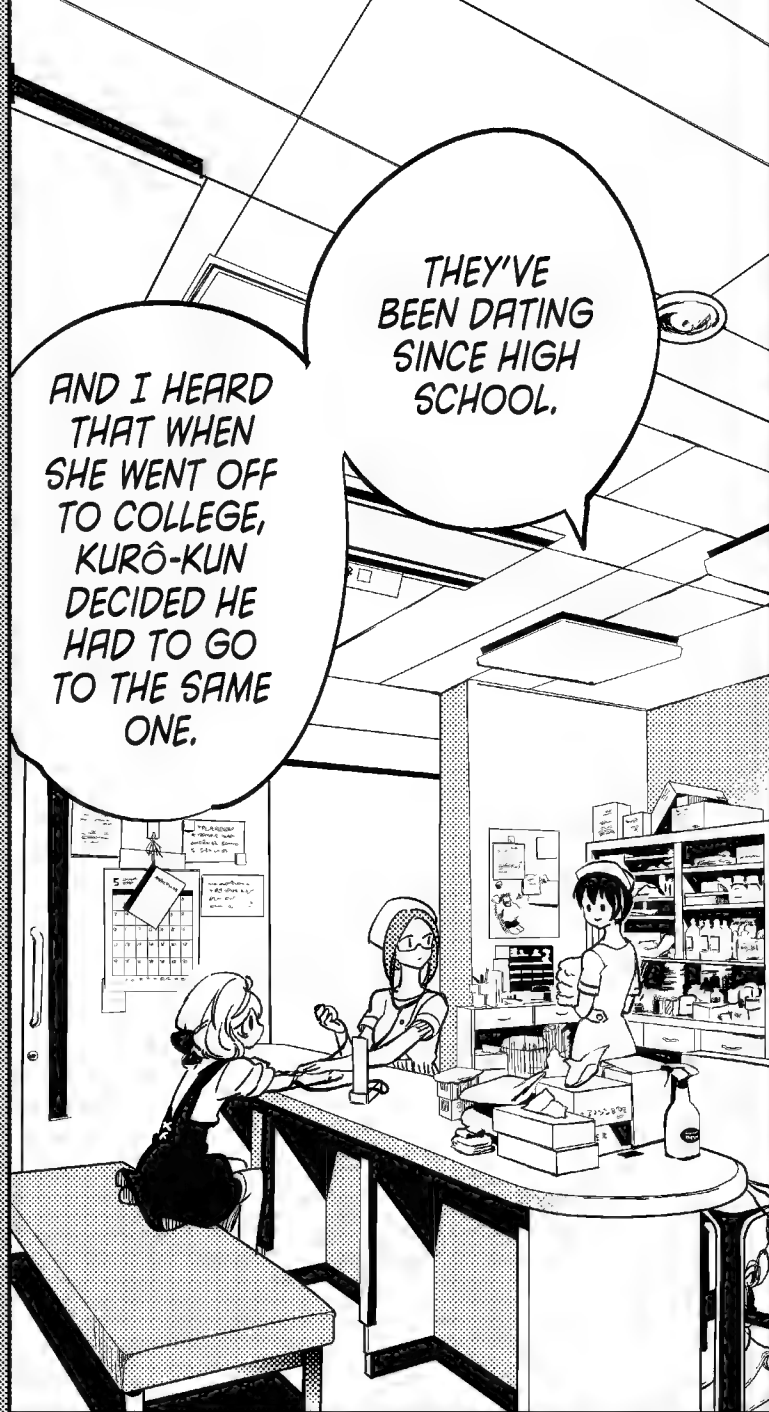
SHE  
COULD  
BE

HIS COUSIN?  
IS SHE A TALL  
WOMAN?

HIS  
COUSIN!!

GASP





AND I HEARD THAT WHEN SHE WENT OFF TO COLLEGE, KURÔ-KUN DECIDED HE HAD TO GO TO THE SAME ONE.

THEY'VE BEEN DATING SINCE HIGH SCHOOL.

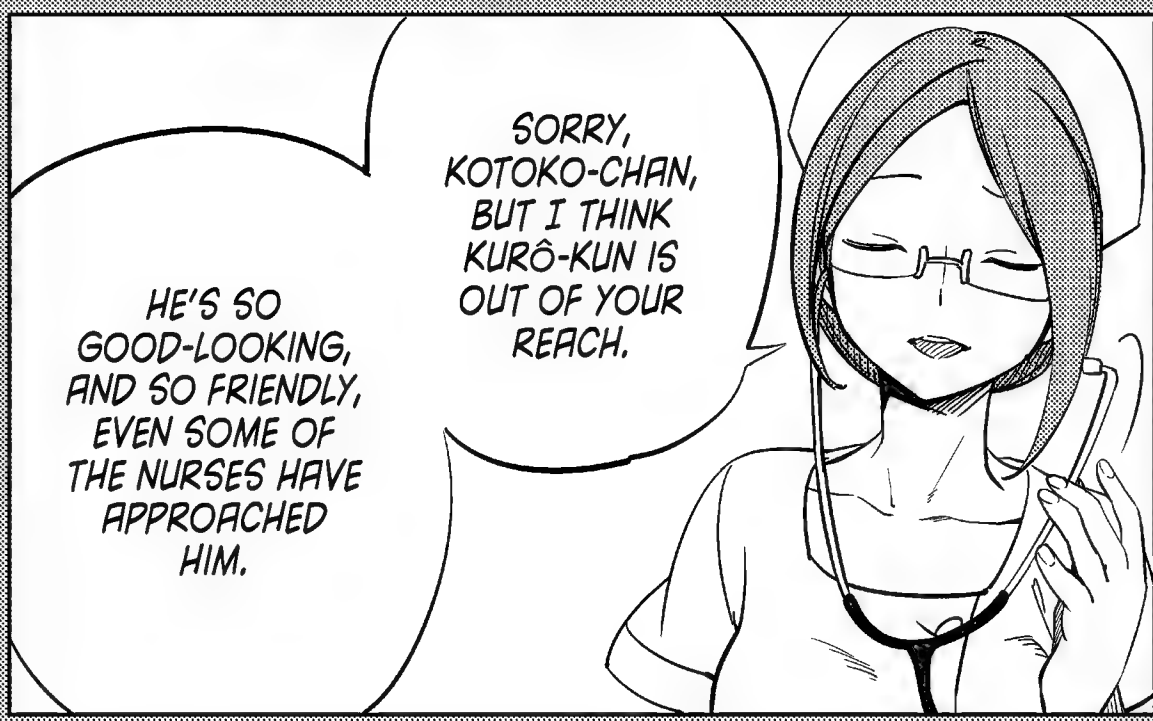


...GIRL-FRIEND.

THE GIRL WHO'S ALWAYS WITH HIM IS SAKI-SAN. SHE'S A YEAR OLDER THAN HE IS, BUT SHE'S HIS...

COUSIN

CRACK



HE'S SO GOOD-LOOKING, AND SO FRIENDLY, EVEN SOME OF THE NURSES HAVE APPROACHED HIM.

SORRY, KOTOKO-CHAN, BUT I THINK KURÔ-KUN IS OUT OF YOUR REACH.



...OOHHH...



WELL ISN'T THAT DELIGHTFUL.

MRRK...

BUT HE'S ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT HIS GIRLFRIEND WITH A HAPPY LOOK ON HIS FACE.





...AND WHISK HIM AWAY BEFORE THINGS CAN GET AWKWARD.



WHenever he's talking to a nurse, she'll butt in on the conversation with a smile on her face...

THE GIRLFRIEND DOESN'T HELP, EITHER.



ARE YOU SAYING I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE?

ば  
STAND



SHE SEEMS REALLY POSSESSIVE, SO I THINK SHE'S THE ONE IN THE RELATIONSHIP WHO'S REALLY HEAD OVER HEELS.

SHE DIDN'T USED TO COME WITH HIM.

BUT EVER SINCE SHE GOT WIND THAT THE NURSES WERE AFTER HIM, SHE'S BEEN JOINING HIM ON ALL HIS VISITS.



WELL,

STRANGER THINGS HAVE HAPPENED, SO THERE'S NO NEED TO GIVE UP ENTIRELY.

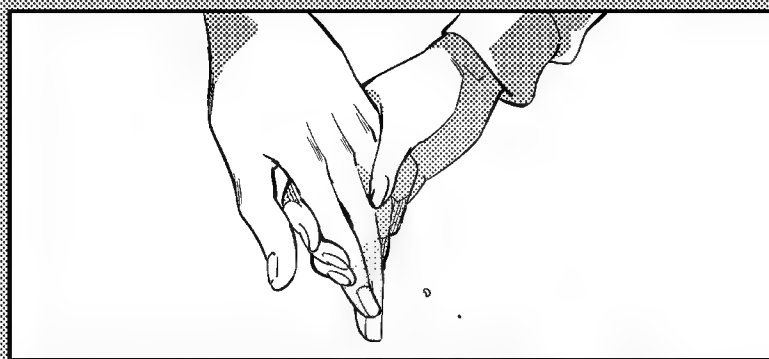
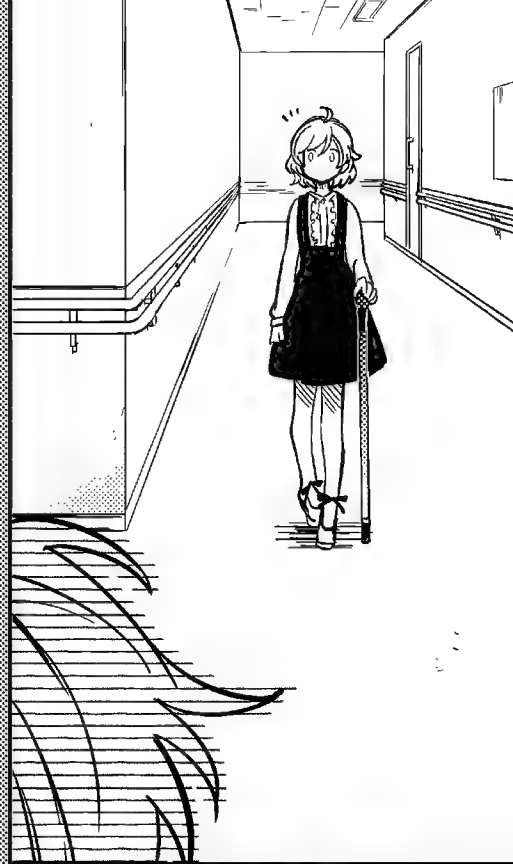
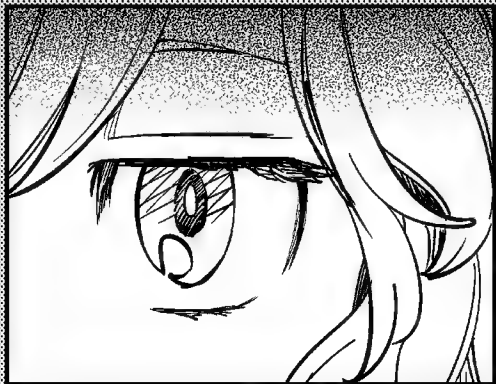
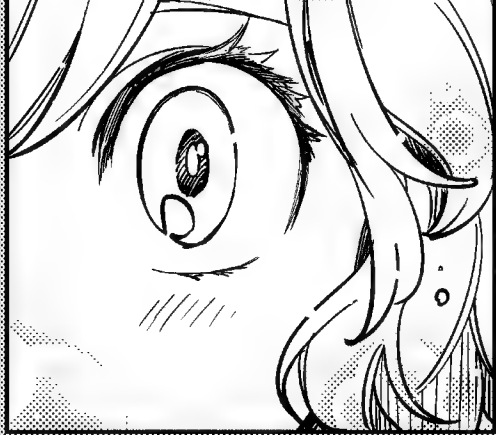


IF SHE'S KURÔ-KUN'S TYPE, I'M NOT SURE HE'LL EVER SEE YOU AS A PROSPECT.

Just as tiny as ever!

KLONG



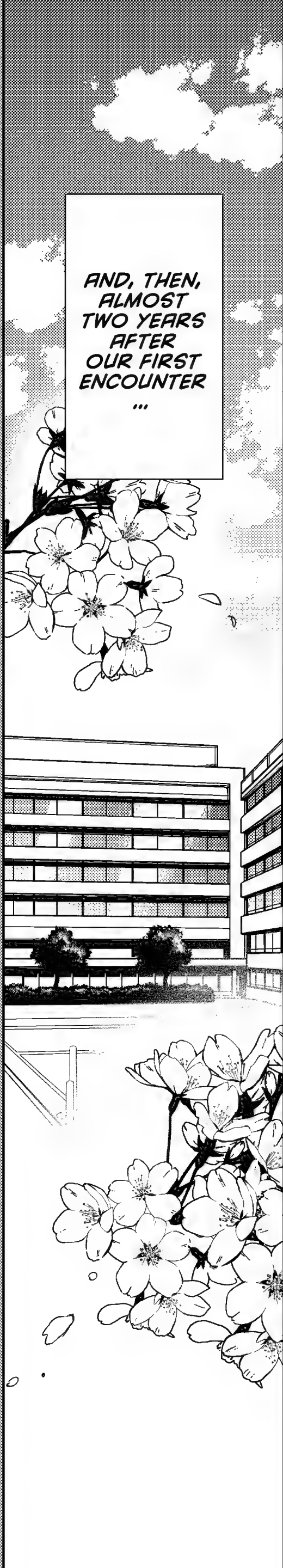
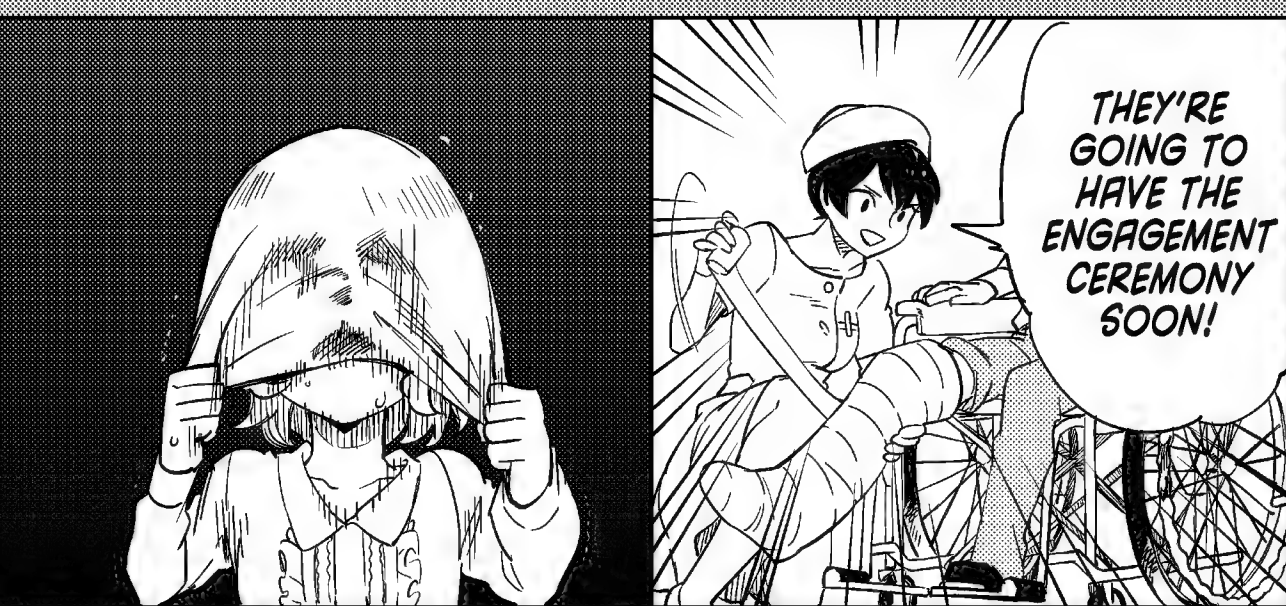
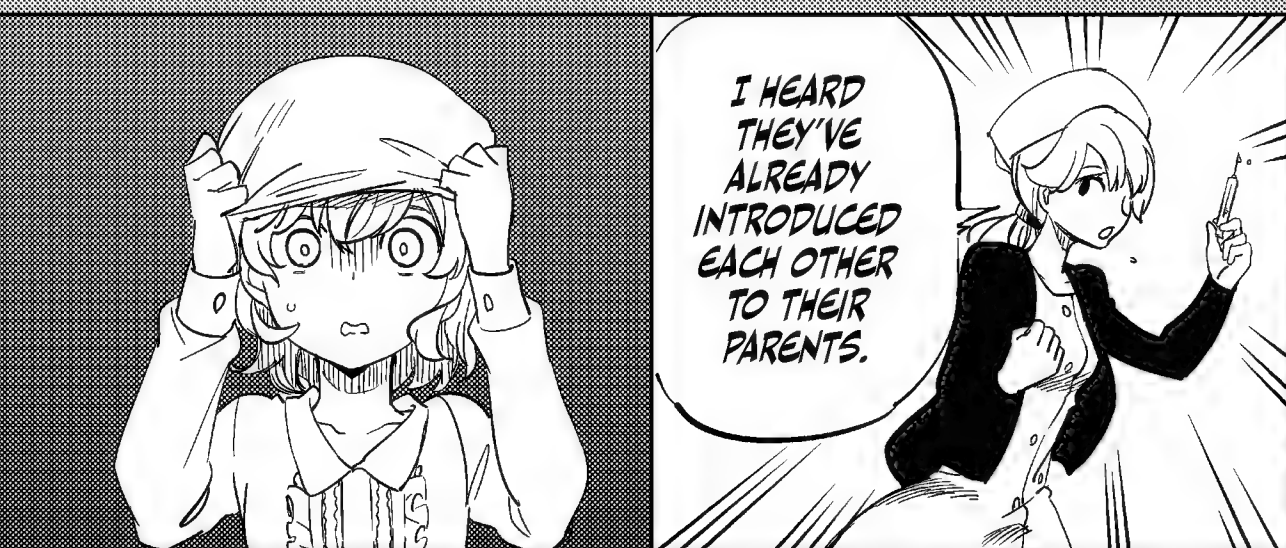
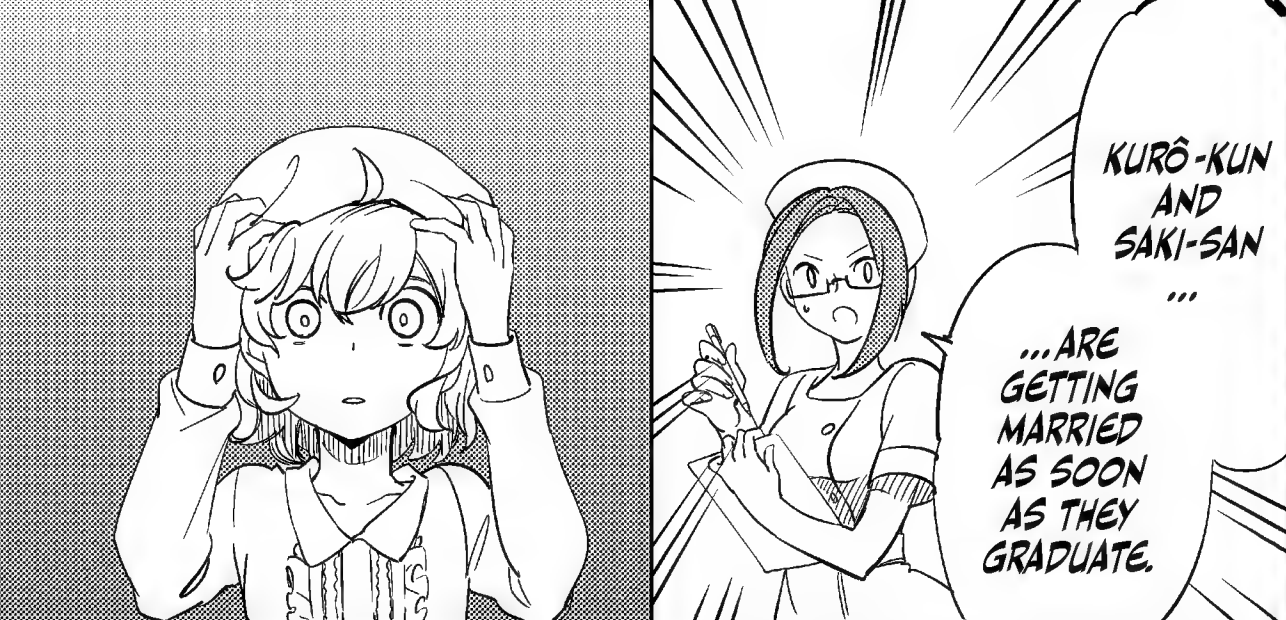


I'D  
WATCH  
HIM, BUT  
I COULD  
NEVER BRING  
MYSELF  
TO TALK  
TO HIM.

I WOULD  
SEE HIM  
AT THE  
HOSPITAL  
TWO OR  
THREE  
TIMES A  
MONTH.

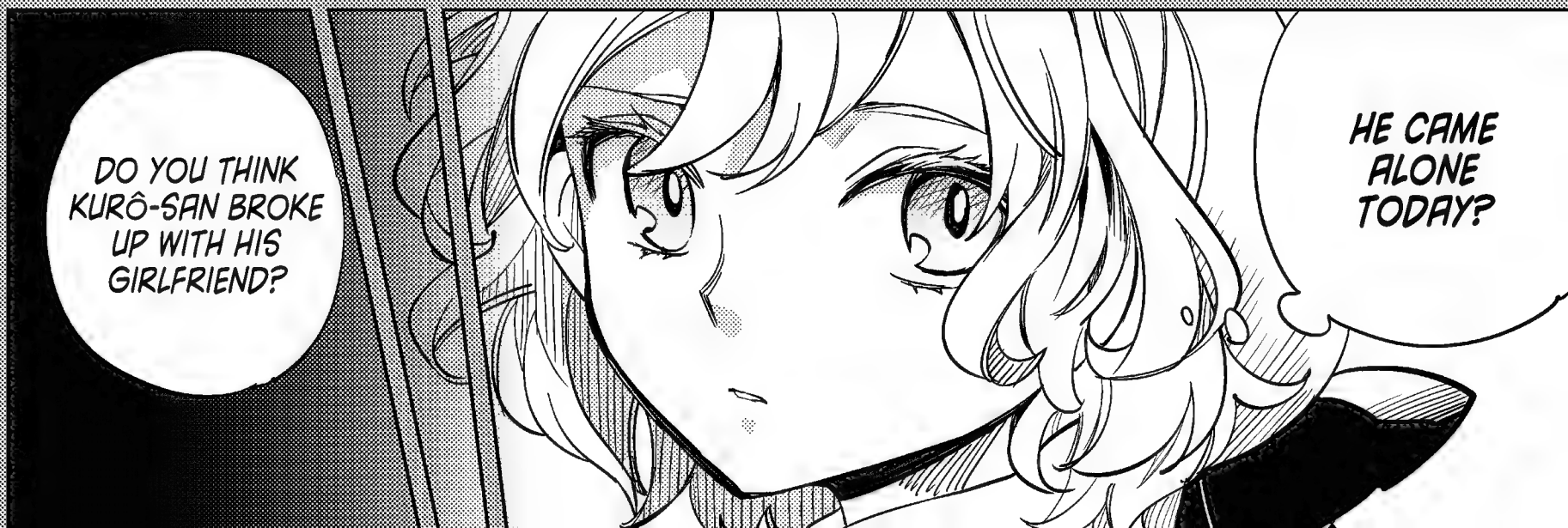
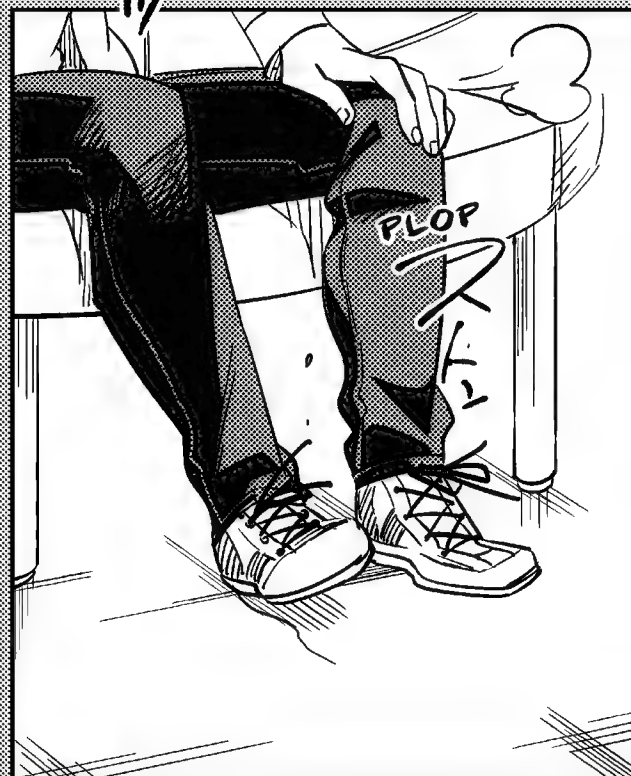
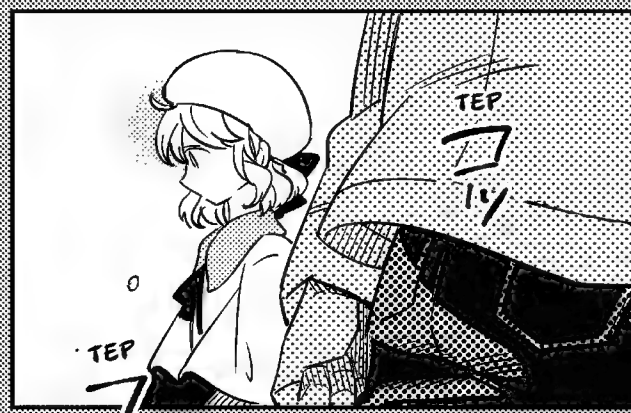




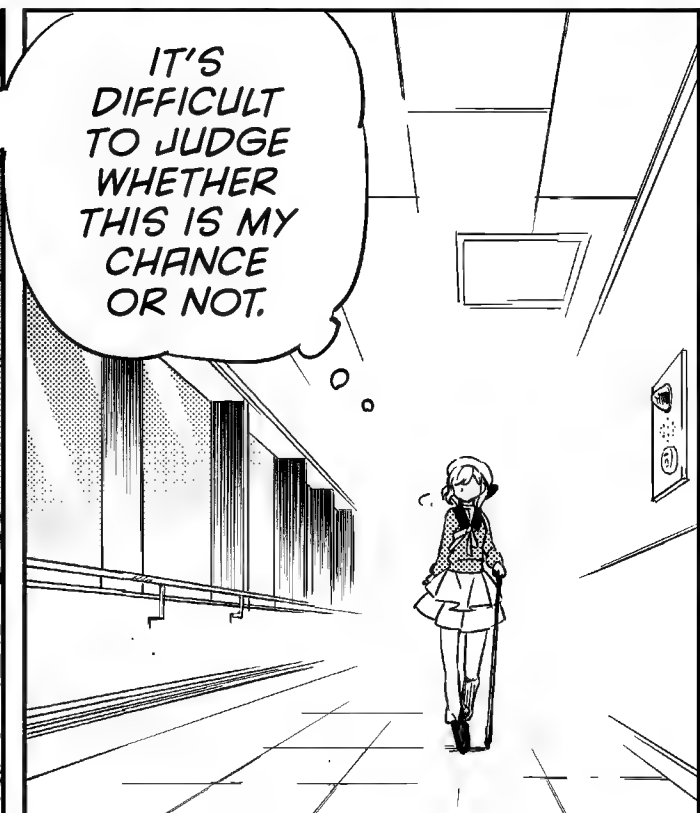
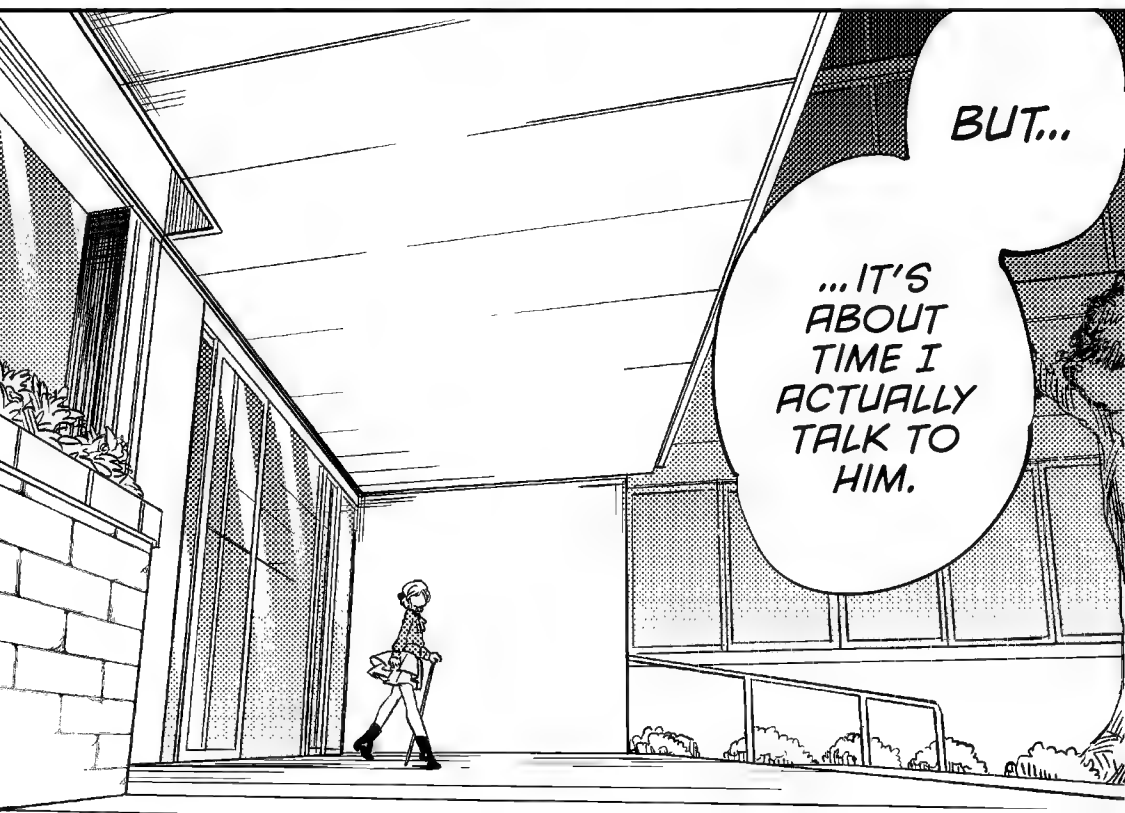
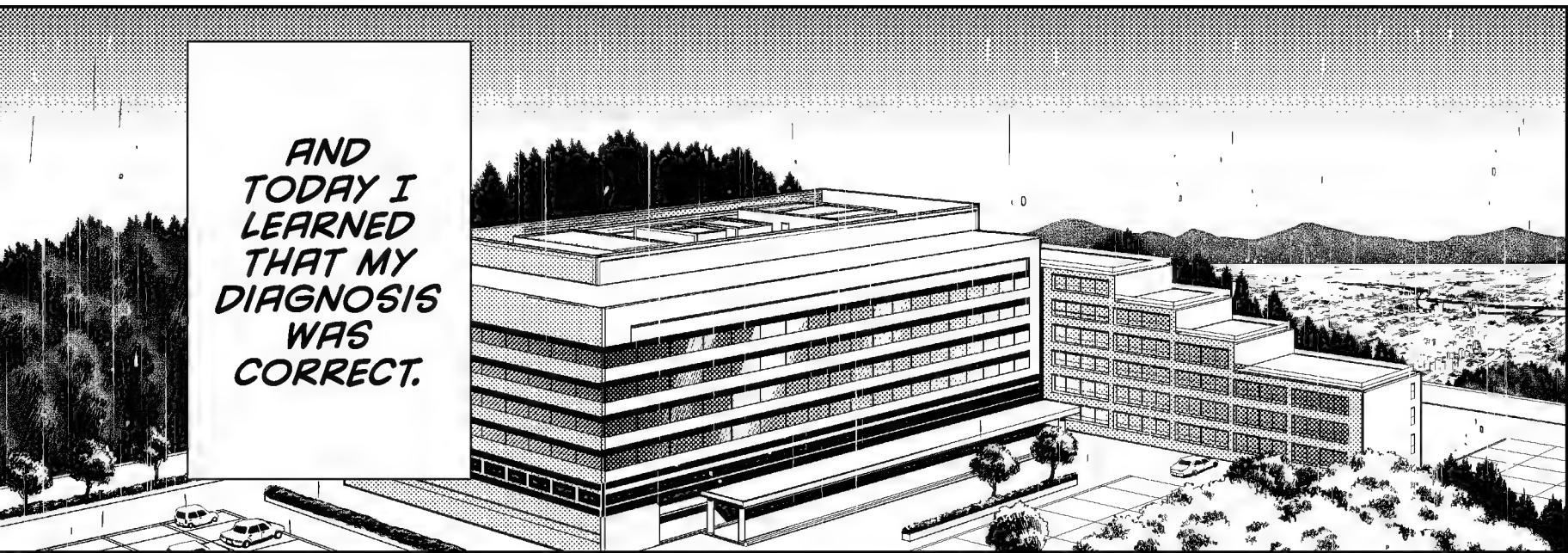
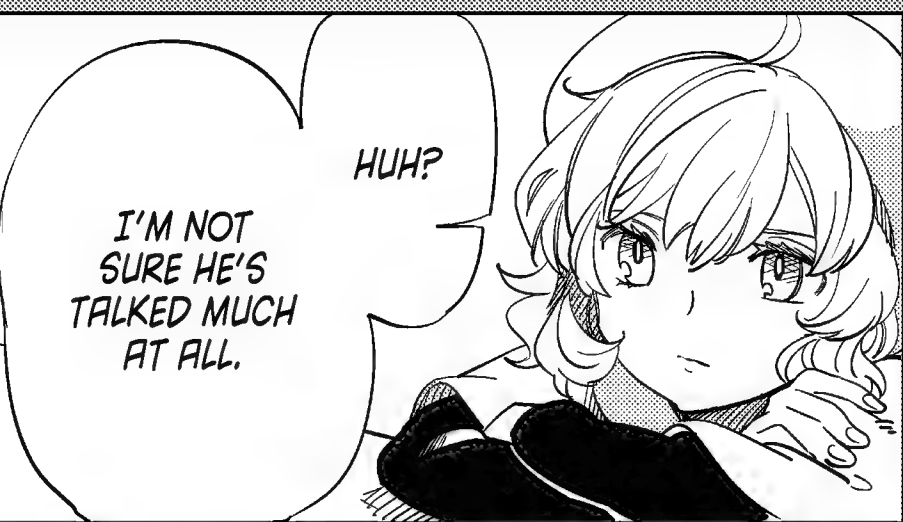


AND, THEN,  
ALMOST  
TWO YEARS  
AFTER  
OUR FIRST  
ENCOUNTER  
...

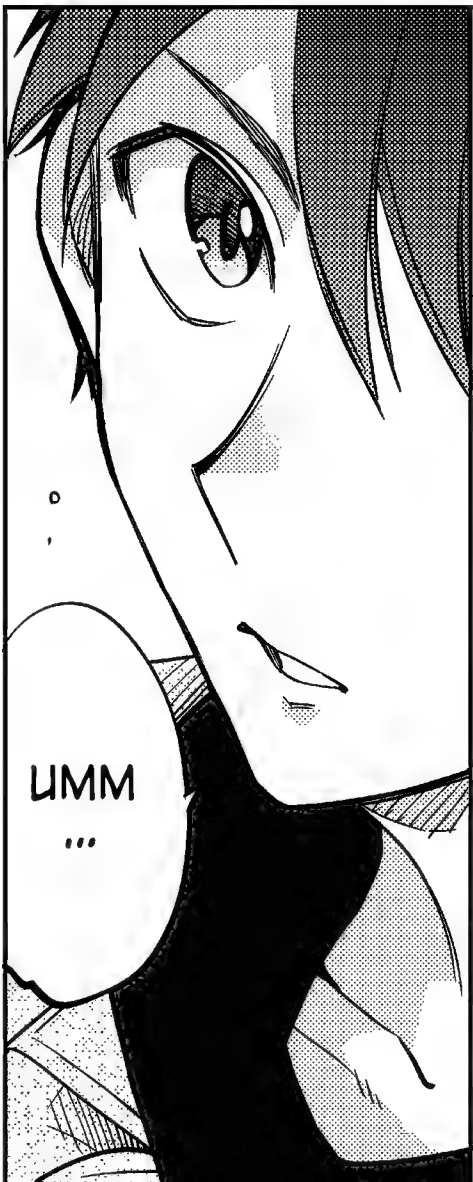




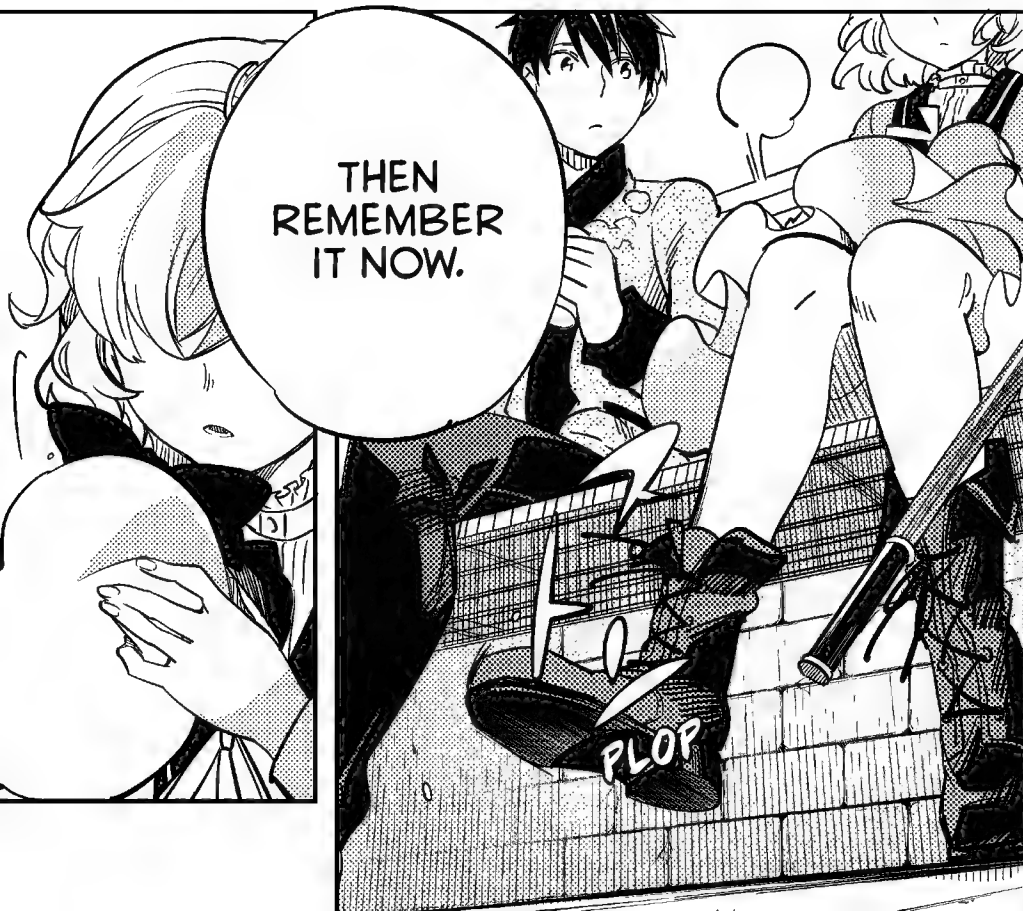
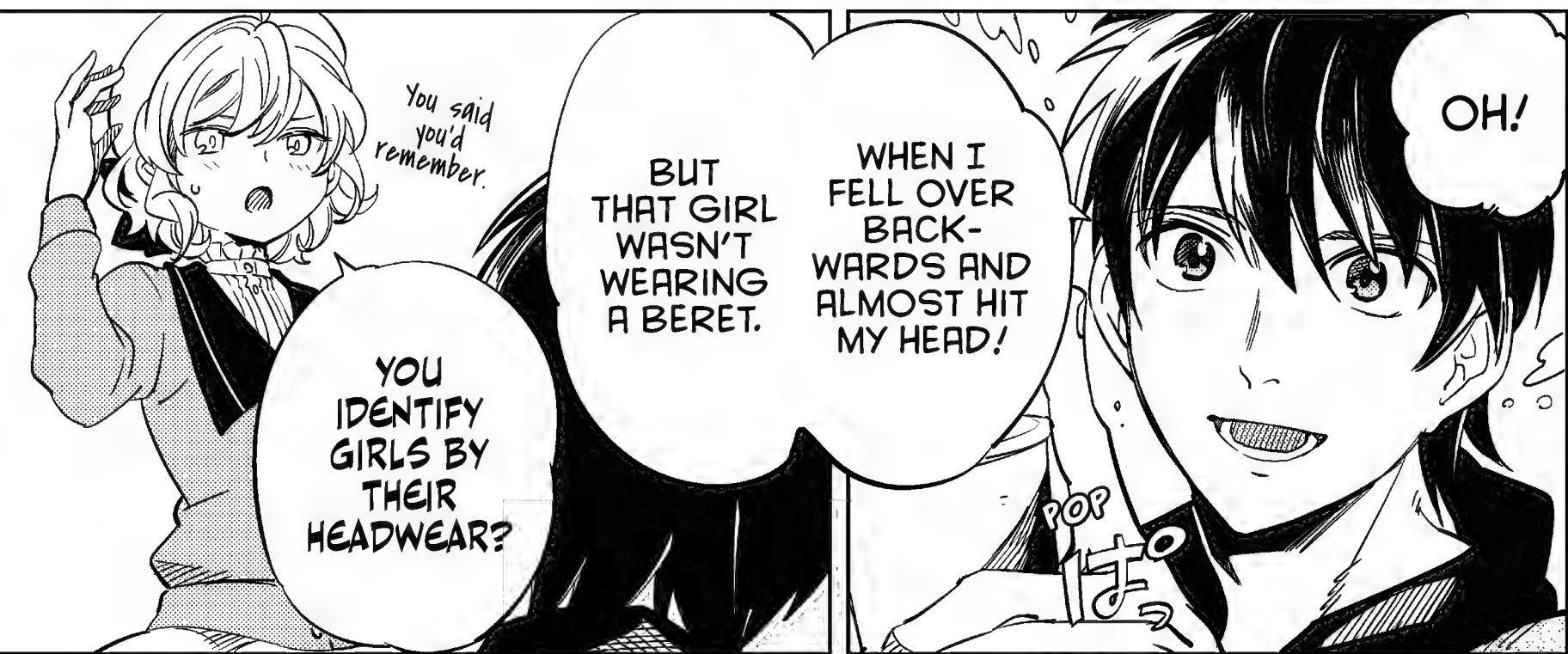
















IT MEANS  
"CHILD OF  
THE HARP,  
OLD AS THE  
ROCKS."

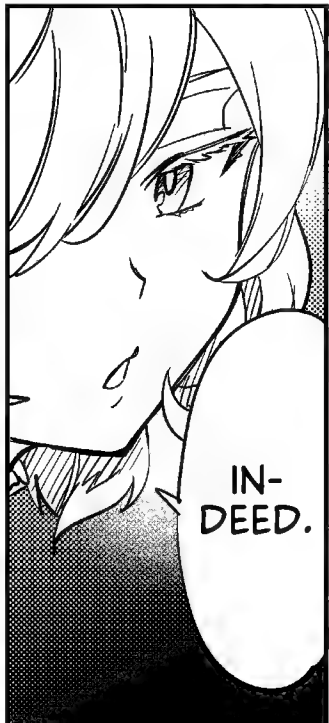
MY NAME  
IS KOTOKO  
IWANAGA.

I  
RECENTLY  
TURNED  
17.

I'M  
FULL OF  
ENERGY.



YOU  
WON'T  
FORGET,  
SINCE  
I HEAR  
YOU'VE  
BROKEN UP  
WITH SAKI-  
SAN...

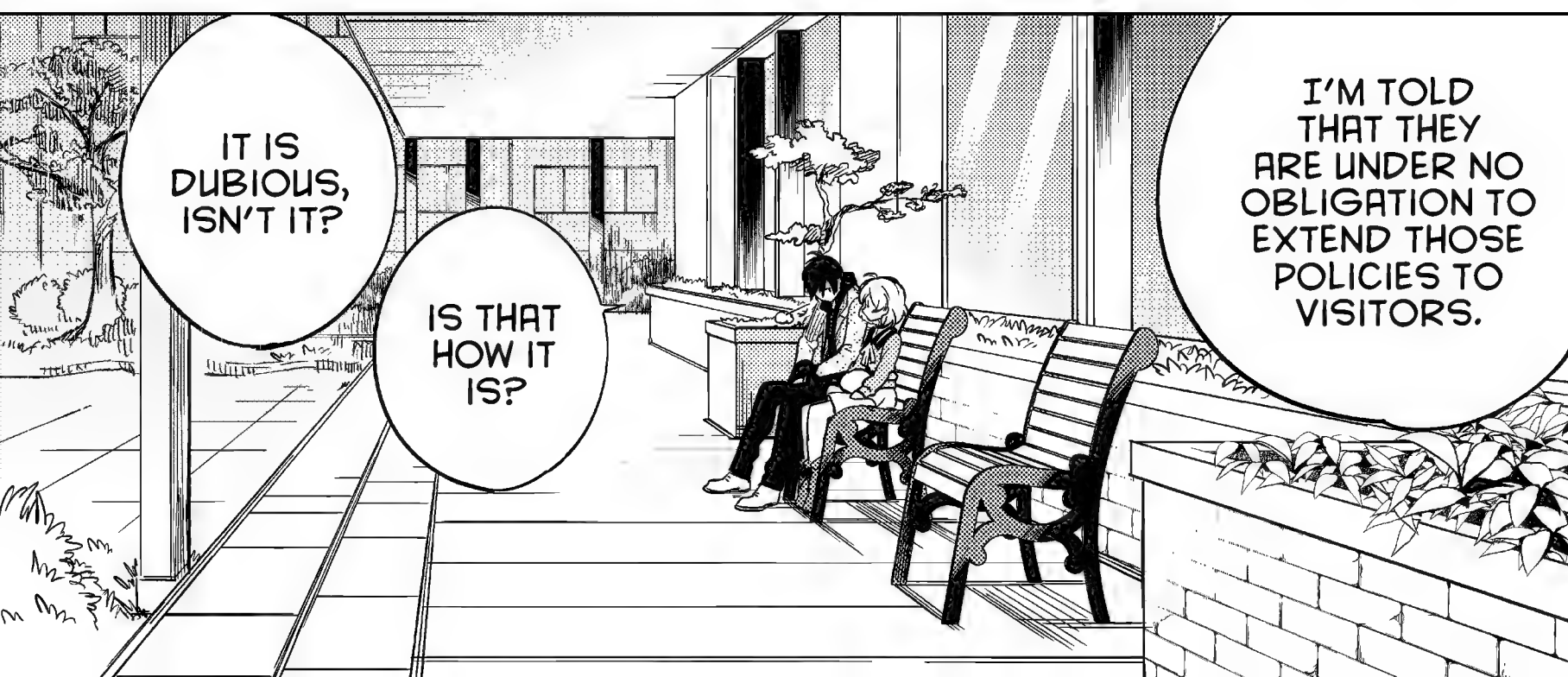


IN-  
DEED.



OKAY.  
I WON'T  
FORGET  
THIS TIME.





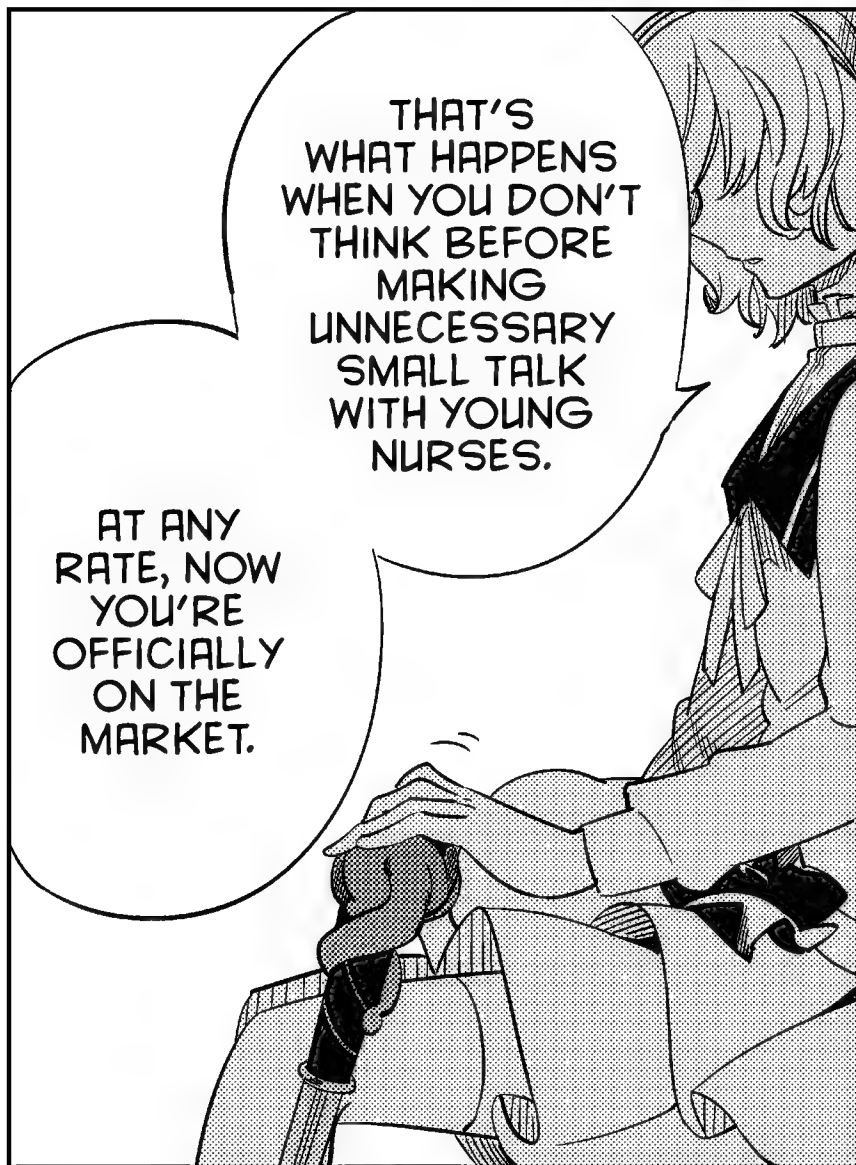




NOBODY'S  
EVER  
KEPT IN THE  
HOSPITAL  
FOR  
ANYTHING  
PLEASANT.

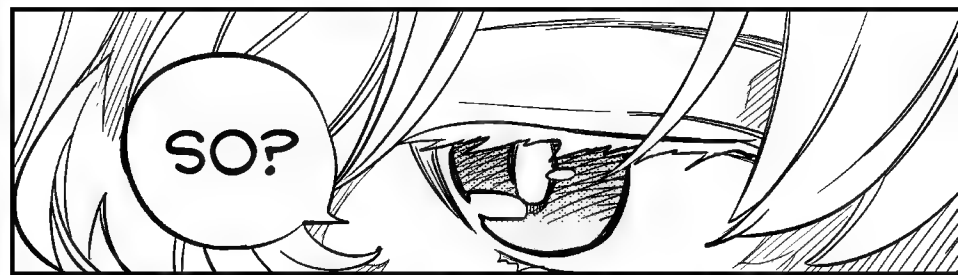
YOU  
DON'T  
WANT TO  
KNOW.

BUT THEY NEVER  
TOLD ME THE NAME  
OF YOUR COUSIN,  
OR WHY SHE'S  
HERE OR ANY OF  
THAT SORT OF  
INFORMATION.



THAT'S  
WHAT HAPPENS  
WHEN YOU DON'T  
THINK BEFORE  
MAKING  
UNNECESSARY  
SMALL TALK  
WITH YOUNG  
NURSES.

AT ANY  
RATE, NOW  
YOU'RE  
OFFICIALLY  
ON THE  
MARKET.



SO?



THEY  
REALLY  
DON'T  
RESPECT  
MY  
PRIVACY.

THEY TELL  
ME YOU AND  
SAKI-SAN  
BROKE UP  
**AT THE  
BEGINNING  
OF SPRING.**



...WOULD  
YOU MIND  
GETTING  
TO THE  
POINT?

WOULDN'T  
YOU LIKE TO  
GET A FRESH  
START BY  
MEETING  
SOMEONE  
NEW?





**WON'T  
YOU DATE  
ME WITH  
MARRIAGE  
IN MIND?**





**I'VE BEEN  
WAITING  
FOR THIS  
MOMENT.**

**I'VE  
HAD A  
CRUSH ON  
YOU FOR  
TWO  
YEARS.**

**YOU'RE  
MORE  
DIRECT  
THAN YOU  
SEEM.**

**BUT TWO  
YEARS?  
THAT'S VERY  
PERSISTENT  
OF YOU.**





BUT IN  
THE EYES  
OF THE LAW,  
DATING  
A MIDDLE  
SCHOOL  
GIRL...

UM...

ONE'S  
DESTINY  
IS WORTH  
WAITING  
FOR.

Would  
you come  
with me  
to the  
station?



SULK  
お  
ぢ

HOW RUDE  
OF ME! THAT  
DOESN'T  
HAPPEN TOO  
OFTEN.



YOU HAVE  
A SHORT  
FUSE,  
DON'T  
YOU?

DO YOU  
HAVE THE  
MEMORY  
OF A CHICKEN  
OR SOME-  
THING?!

NEXT  
YEAR, I'M  
GOING TO TAKE  
THE ENTRANCE  
EXAM TO GET  
INTO YOUR  
COLLEGE!

I TOLD  
YOU, I'M  
17! I'M  
IN HIGH  
SCHOOL!

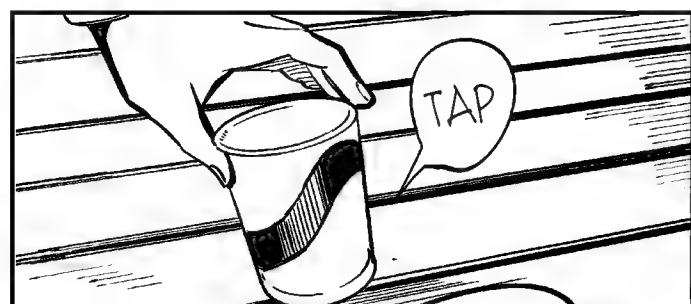


GRR



PFFT

Ha  
ha!



TAP





IT'S JUST,  
IF A HIGH  
SCHOOL GIRL  
IS TELLING ME  
SHE LIKES  
ME, MAYBE  
I'M NOT SO  
WASHED UP  
AFTER ALL.

I HAVEN'T  
FELT THIS  
GOOD IN A  
LONG TIME.

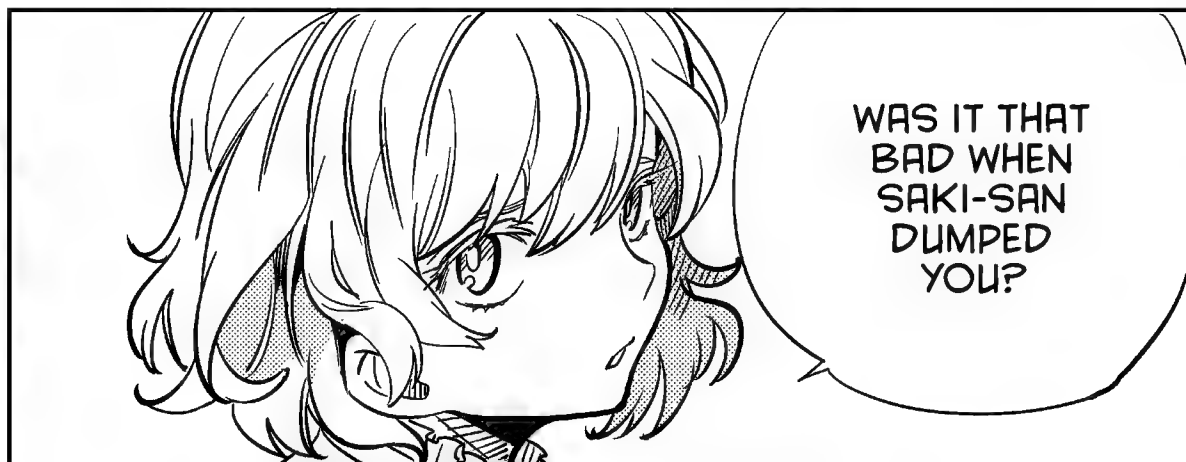


I'M  
KIDDING.  
THAT MADE  
ME KINDA  
HAPPY.



WE  
EVEN HAD  
A LONG-  
DISTANCE  
RELATIONSHIP  
FOR A WHILE,  
AND WE  
MADE IT  
WORK.

I'D DATED  
HER SINCE  
HIGH  
SCHOOL.



WAS IT THAT  
BAD WHEN  
SAKI-SAN  
DUMPED  
YOU?



BUT SHE  
IS THE  
ONE WHO  
BROKE UP  
WITH YOU,  
RIGHT?

IT  
WASN'T  
HER  
FAULT.

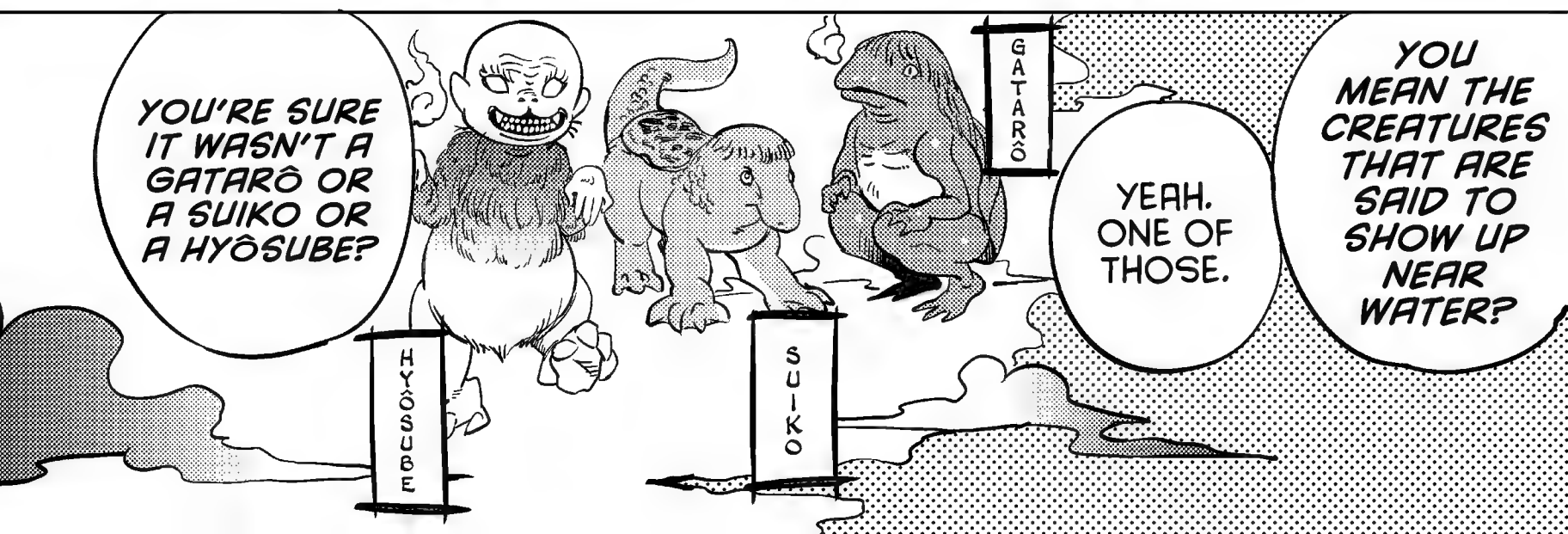
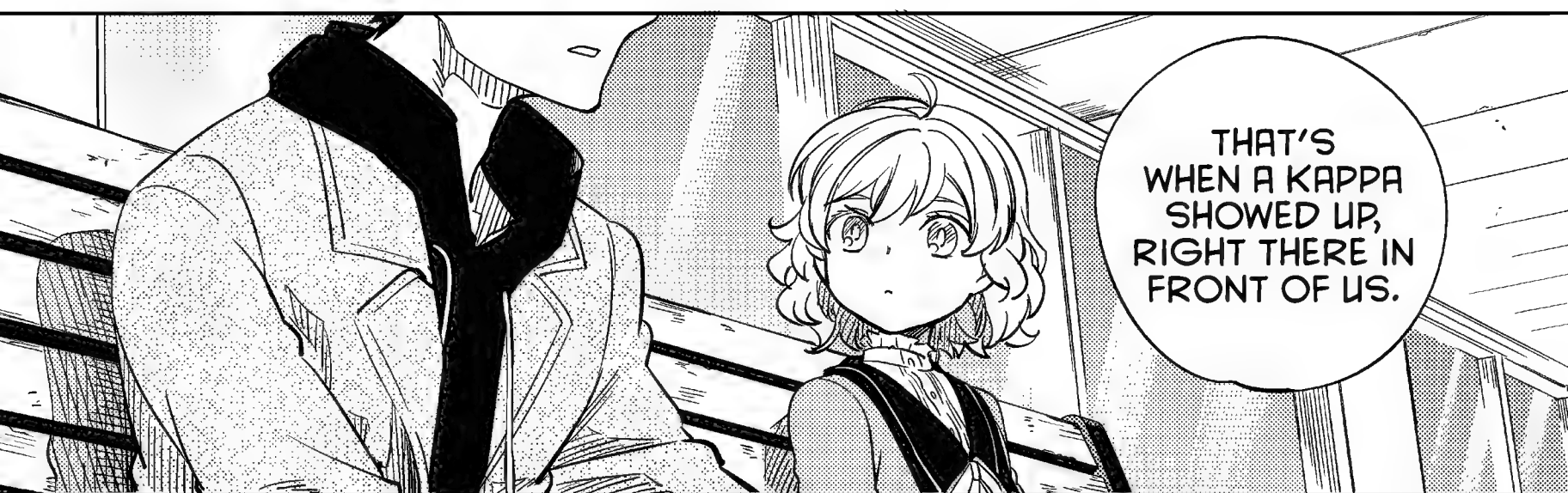




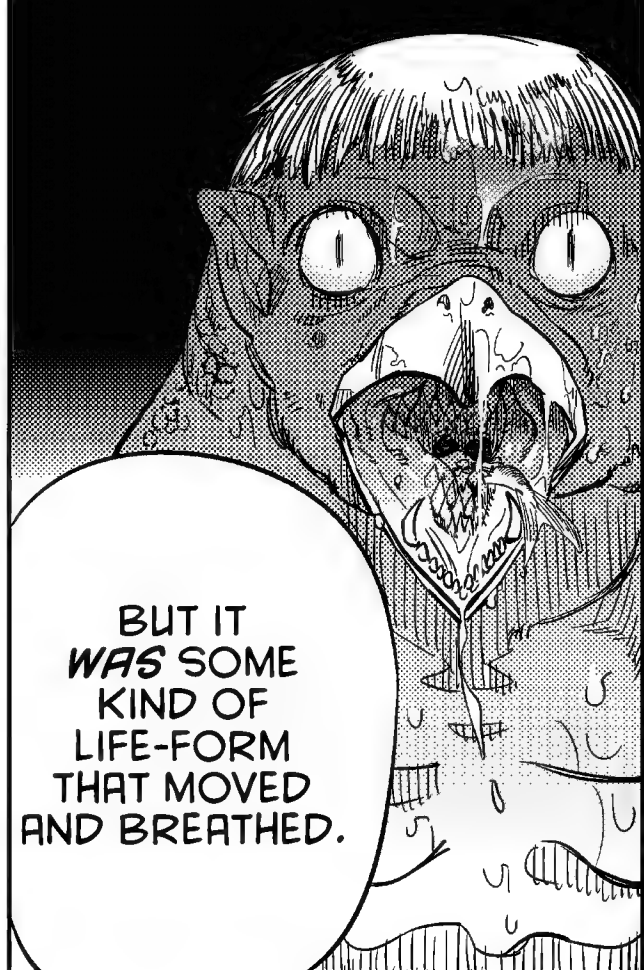












BUT IT *WAS* SOME KIND OF LIFE-FORM THAT MOVED AND BREATHED.



THE ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT IT WASN'T HUMAN, AND IT WASN'T AN ANIMAL.



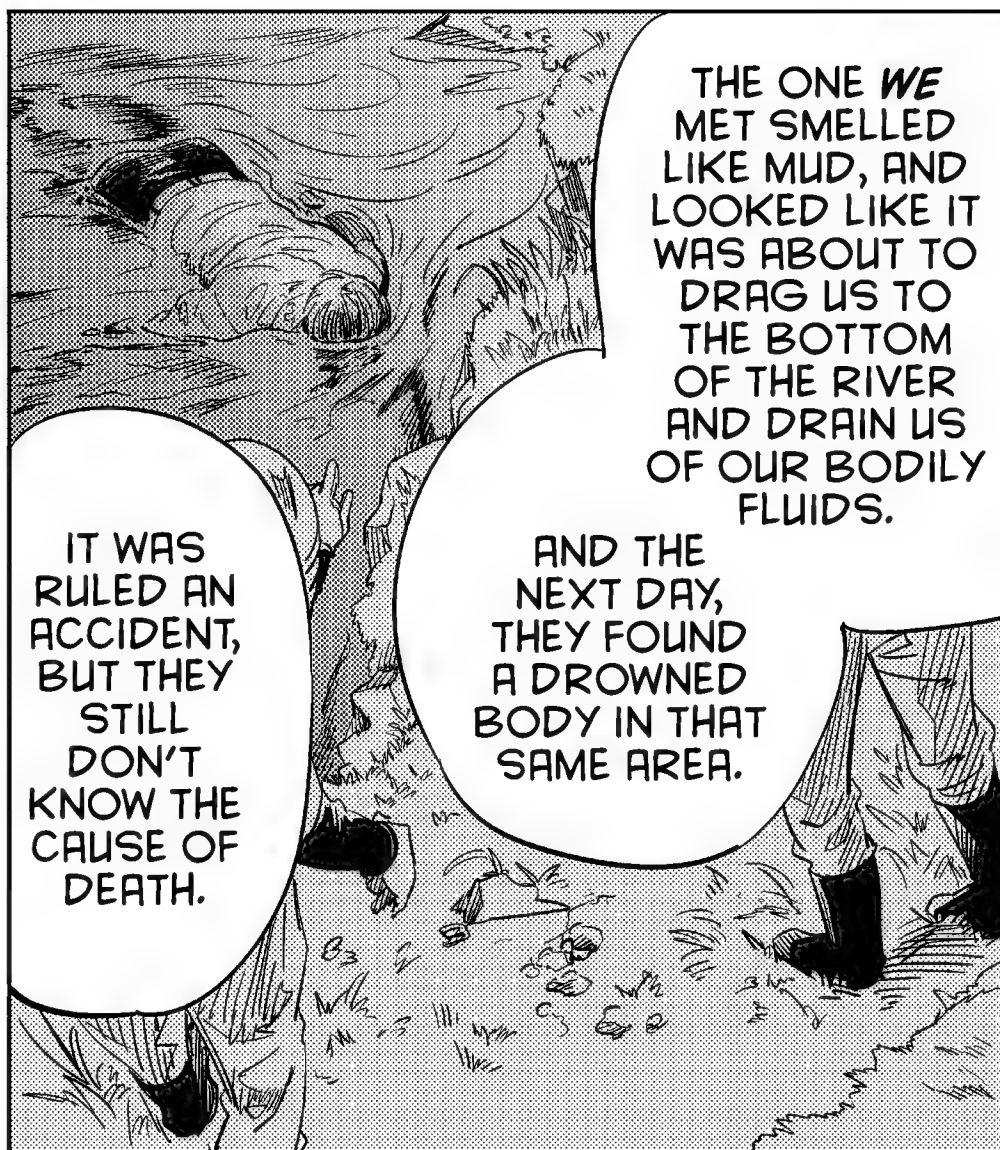
YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT THIS STUFF. IT'S PRETTY SURPRISING.

WHATEVER IT WAS, "KAPPA" WAS A FITTING NAME FOR IT.



THE MERE SIGHT WOULD CAUSE THE FIRST CRACK TO FORM IN THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR WHOLE WORLD.

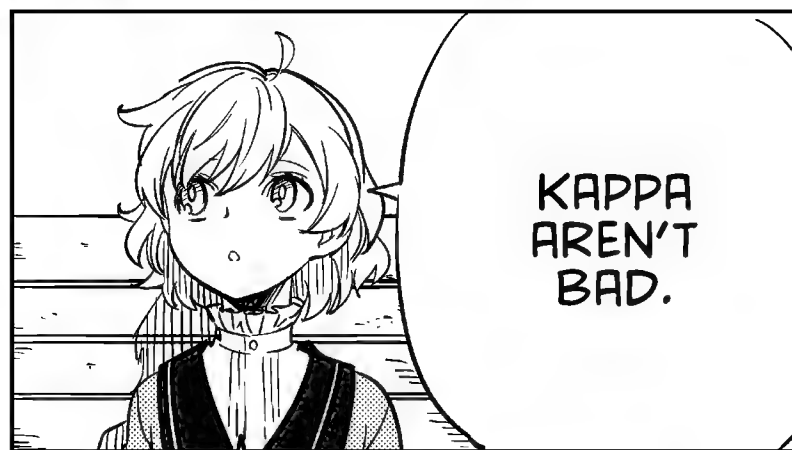
IT WAS A FEARSOME THING—SOMETHING WITH A PRESENCE THAT, ONCE RECOGNIZED, WOULD MAKE YOU BELIEVE THE UNBELIEVABLE.



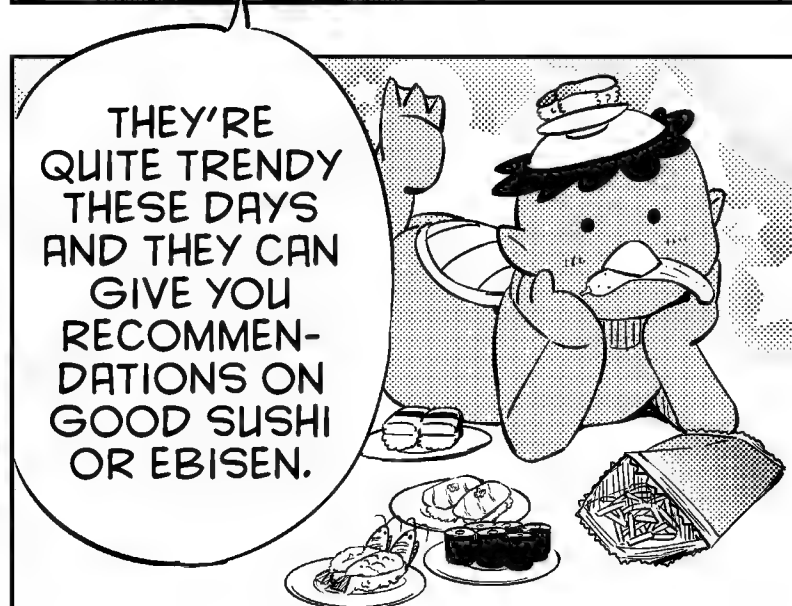
THE ONE *WE* MET SMELLED LIKE MUD, AND LOOKED LIKE IT WAS ABOUT TO DRAG US TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER AND DRAIN US OF OUR BODILY FLUIDS.

IT WAS RULED AN ACCIDENT, BUT THEY STILL DON'T KNOW THE CAUSE OF DEATH.

AND THE NEXT DAY, THEY FOUND A DROWNED BODY IN THAT SAME AREA.



KAPPA AREN'T BAD.

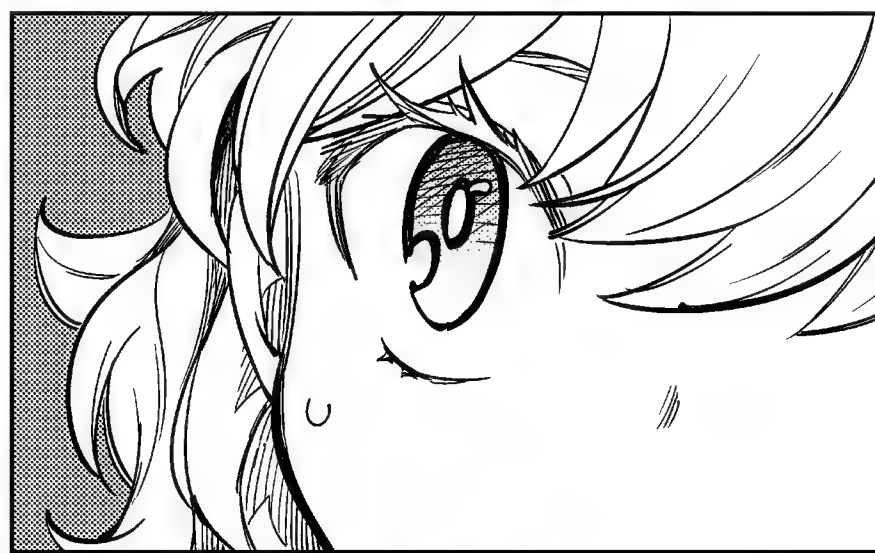


THEY'RE QUITE TRENDY THESE DAYS AND THEY CAN GIVE YOU RECOMMENDATIONS ON GOOD SUSHI OR EBISEN.



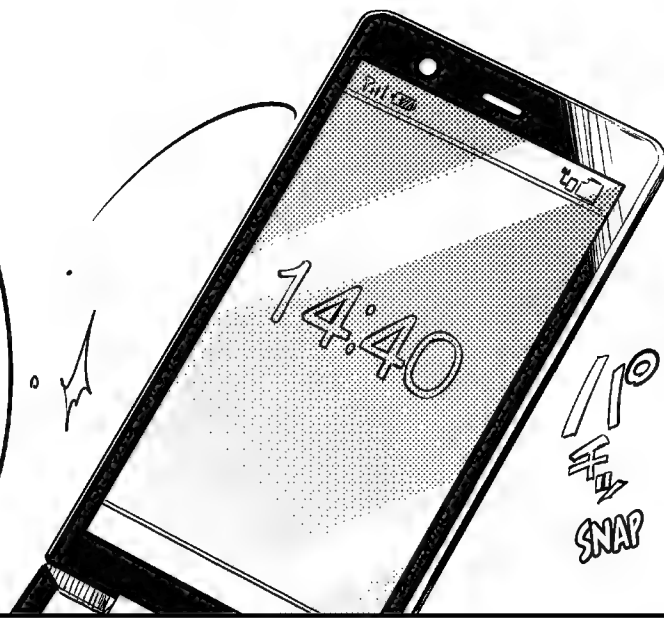






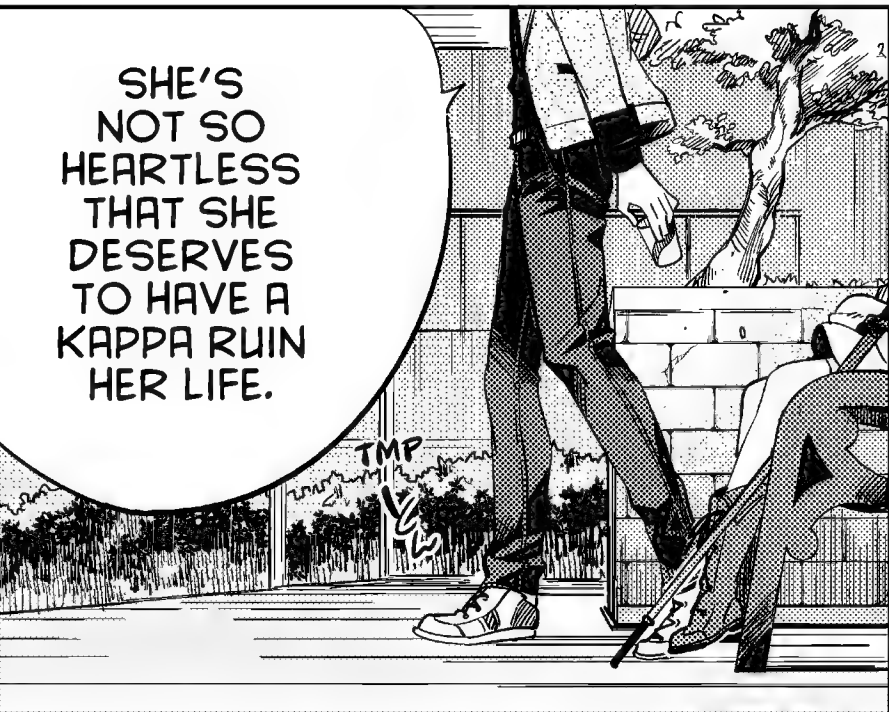


I HOPE THIS  
DOESN'T SCAR  
HER FOR LIFE. I  
DON'T WANT HER  
WONDERING IF IT  
WAS A KAPPA  
EVERY TIME A  
DEAD BODY  
WASHES UP.



SAKI-SAN'S  
PROBABLY  
TRAINING AT  
THE POLICE  
ACADEMY  
ABOUT NOW.

SHE'S  
NOT SO  
HEARTLESS  
THAT SHE  
DESERVES  
TO HAVE A  
KAPPA RUIN  
HER LIFE.



WHO CARES  
WHAT HAPPENS  
TO THAT HEART-  
LESS WOMAN?



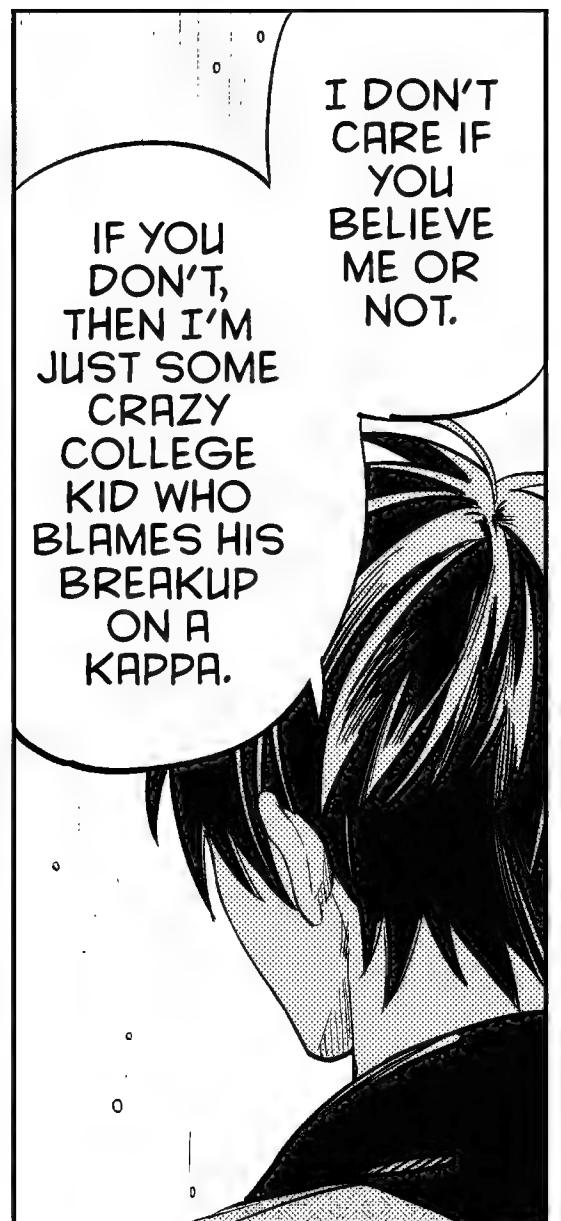
OR MAYBE A  
COLLEGE KID  
WHO LOST HIS  
MIND FROM  
THE SHOCK OF  
THE BREAKUP.

EITHER WAY,  
I DOUBT  
I'M WORTHY  
TO BE YOUR  
BOYFRIEND.



IF YOU  
DON'T,  
THEN I'M  
JUST SOME  
CRAZY  
COLLEGE  
KID WHO  
BLAMES HIS  
BREAKUP  
ON A  
KAPPA.

I DON'T  
CARE IF  
YOU  
BELIEVE  
ME OR  
NOT.

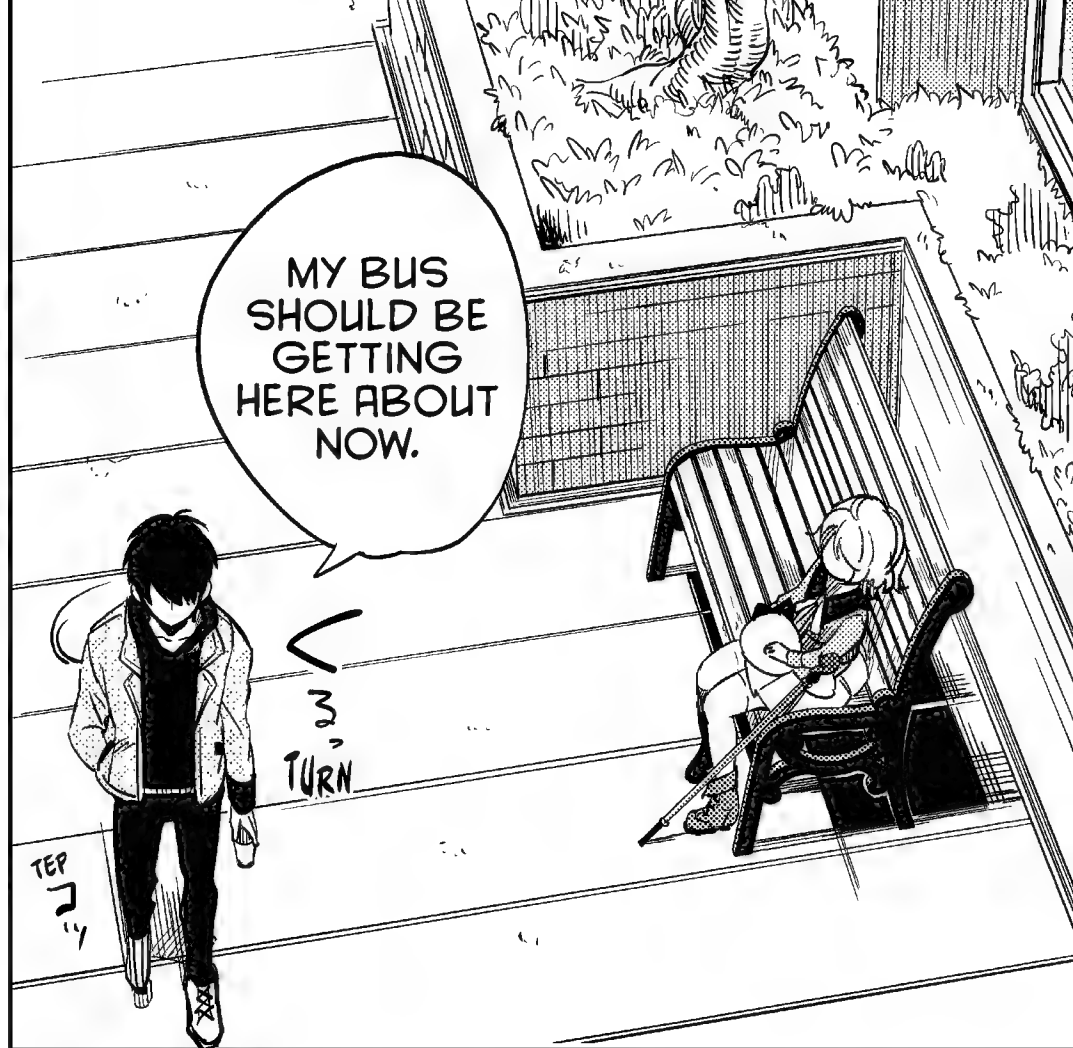






BUT WE  
HAVEN'T  
FINISHED  
TALKING  
YET.

I'M  
TAKING  
THE BUS,  
TOO. IT'S  
PROBABLY  
THE SAME  
ONE, BASED  
ON THE  
TIME.



MY BUS  
SHOULD BE  
GETTING  
HERE ABOUT  
NOW.

TURN

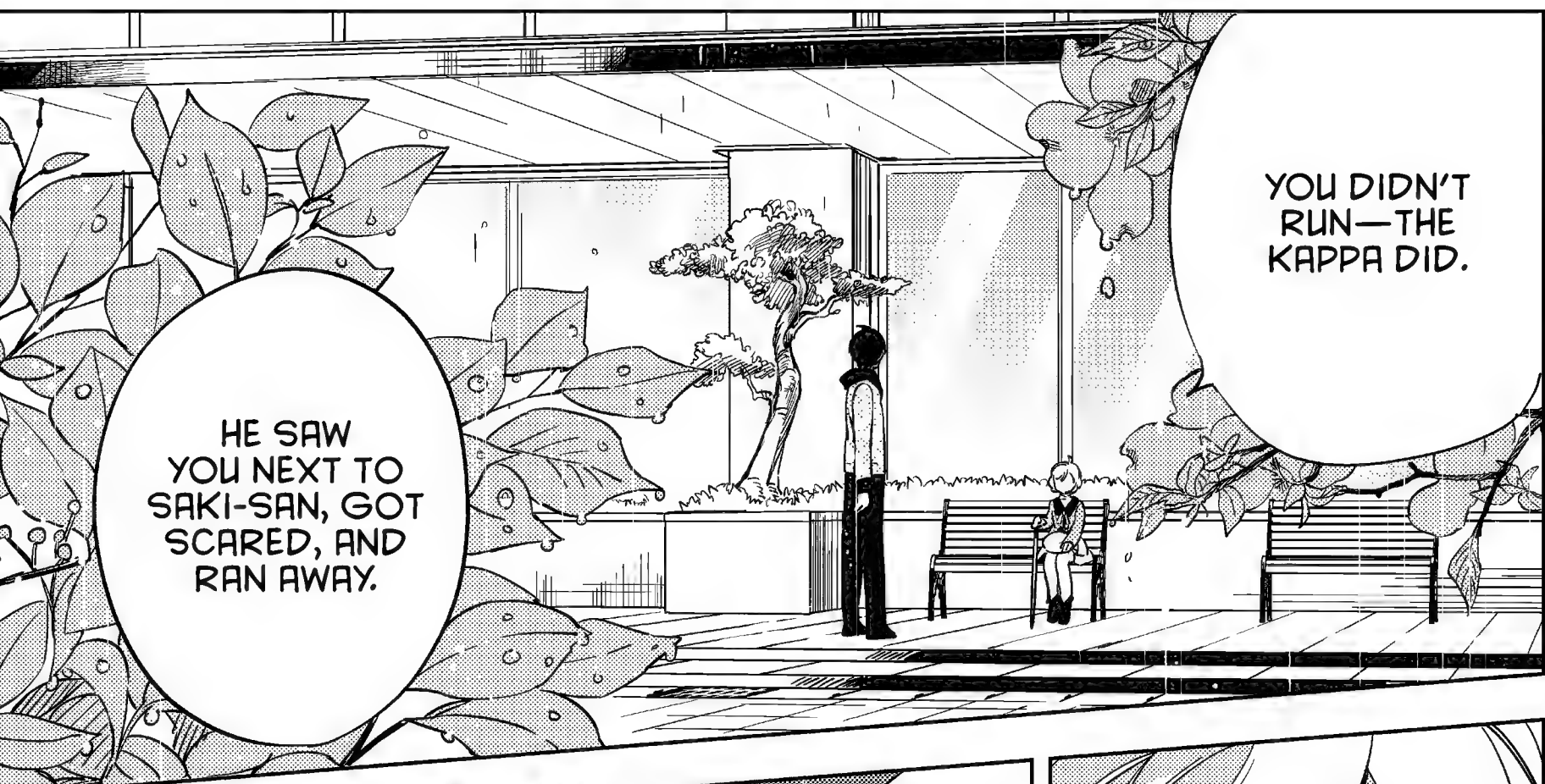
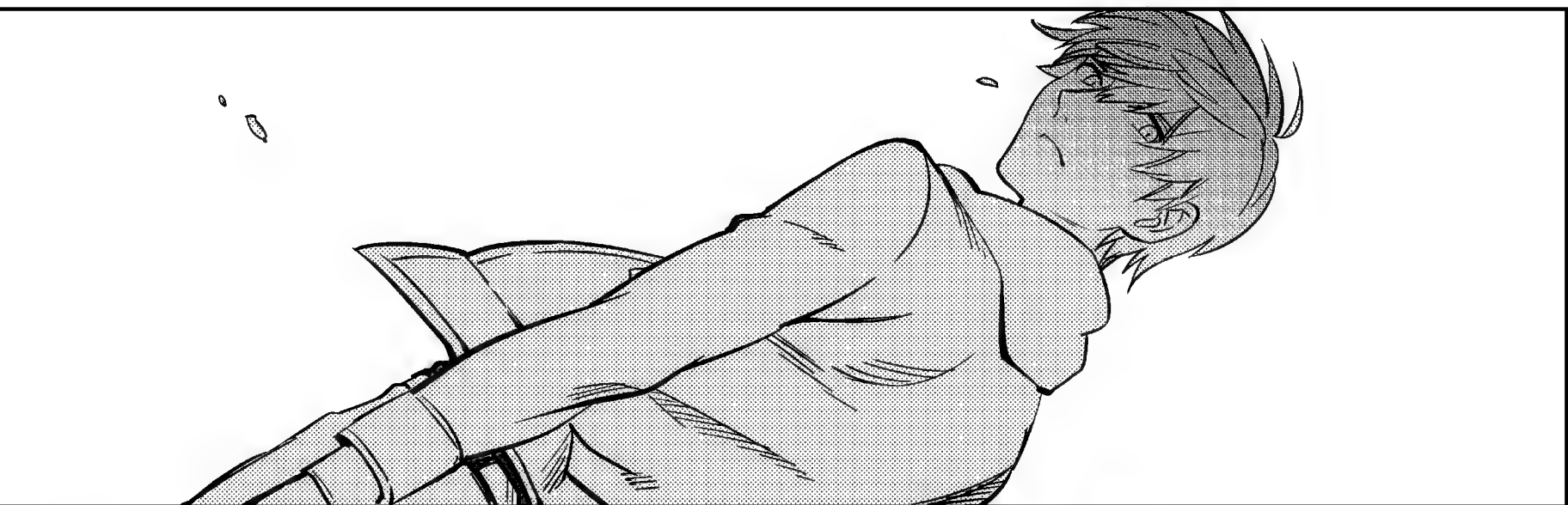
TEP



WHICH  
ONE  
OF YOU  
WAS THE  
COWARD  
THAT RAN  
AND LEFT  
SAKI-SAN  
BEHIND?

YOU  
WEREN'T  
VERY CLEAR  
ABOUT THE  
SUBJECT  
OF YOUR  
SENTENCES.





HE SAW  
YOU NEXT TO  
SAKI-SAN, GOT  
SCARED, AND  
RAN AWAY.

YOU DIDN'T  
RUN—THE  
KAPPA DID.



I FEEL  
SORRY  
FOR HIM.



RUNNING  
INTO *YOU*  
IN THE  
MIDDLE OF  
THE NIGHT.

FROM  
HIS  
POINT  
OF VIEW,  
HE'S A  
VERY  
UNLUCKY  
KAPPA.



THEY'RE  
INTELLIGENT  
CREATURES,  
SO HE WOULD  
HAVE KNOWN  
EXACTLY  
WHAT HE WAS  
AFRAID OF.





"I  
DIDN'T  
KNOW  
THAT YOU  
WERE  
THAT KIND  
OF MAN."



THAT'S  
WHAT  
SHE  
SAID...



SAKI-SAN  
SAW THAT  
HORRID YÔKAI  
RUN AWAY AT  
THE SIGHT OF  
YOU. SHE GOT  
SPOOKED. SHE  
WONDERED  
WHAT IT  
MEANT.



...ISN'T  
THAT  
RIGHT?



THERE'S NO  
SUCH THING  
AS KAPPA.



WHAT  
DETAIL  
IS  
THAT?



YOU'RE  
WRONG  
ABOUT  
ONE FUN-  
DAMENTAL  
DETAIL.







I WOULDN'T  
TELL SOME  
RANDOM  
LITTLE GIRL  
THE TRUE  
STORY OF  
MY HEART-  
BREAK.

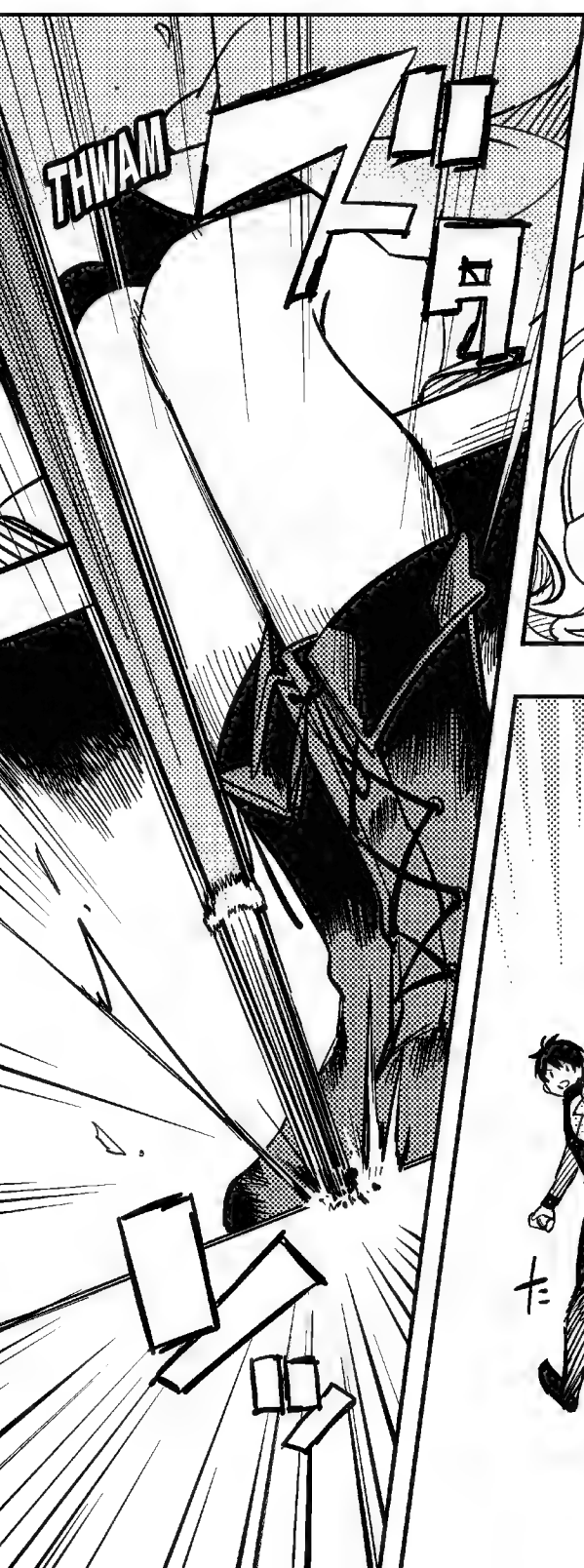
I WAS  
LYING.

BUT YOU  
JUST SAID  
YOU SAW  
ONE.



OF  
COURSE  
NOT.

ISN'T  
THERE?



THWAM



SORRY.

THEY  
ALREADY  
SEE ME  
ONCE A  
MONTH.

IF YOU  
STILL THINK  
THEY EXIST,  
THERE'S THE  
PSYCHIATRIC  
WARD. GO GET  
YOUR HEAD  
EXAMINED.

FIP



TAKE  
CARE OF  
YOUR-  
SELF.

す  
た  
SCAMPER



OH.

THEN I  
RECOMMEND  
THEY KEEP  
SEEING YOU.





I'VE  
ONLY EVER  
HAD ONE  
INTERVIEW  
WITH A  
KAPPA.

BUT I  
AM WELL  
ACQUAINTED  
WITH MANY  
OF THEIR  
KIND.



THIS  
CONVERSA-  
TION ISN'T  
OVER.



BUT  
THEY'RE IN  
THE SHADOWS  
OF THE AZALEAS,  
IN THE TOPS OF  
THE FLOWERING  
DOGWOOD  
TREES...

THEY MAY  
NOT BE AS  
FAMOUS AS  
KAPPA,

...WATCHING  
US IN  
SECRET.



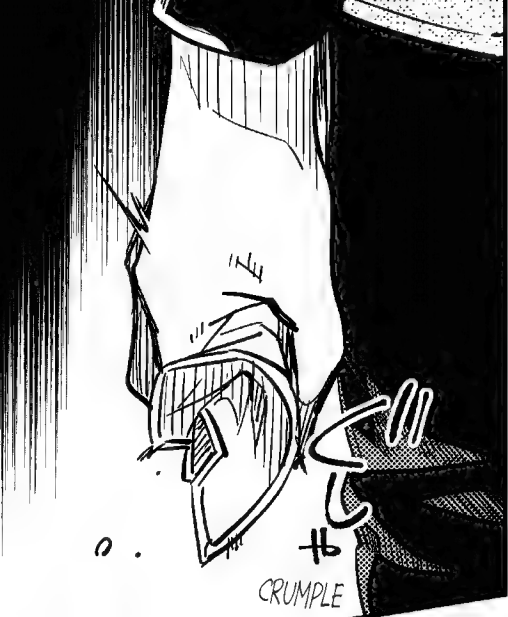
THEY'RE  
ALL OVER  
THIS TOWN.  
EVEN THIS  
HOSPITAL...

...HAS  
YŌKAI,  
MONSTERS,  
SPECTRES,  
DEMONS...



...LURKING  
IN ITS  
HALLS.





WHO  
ARE  
YOU?

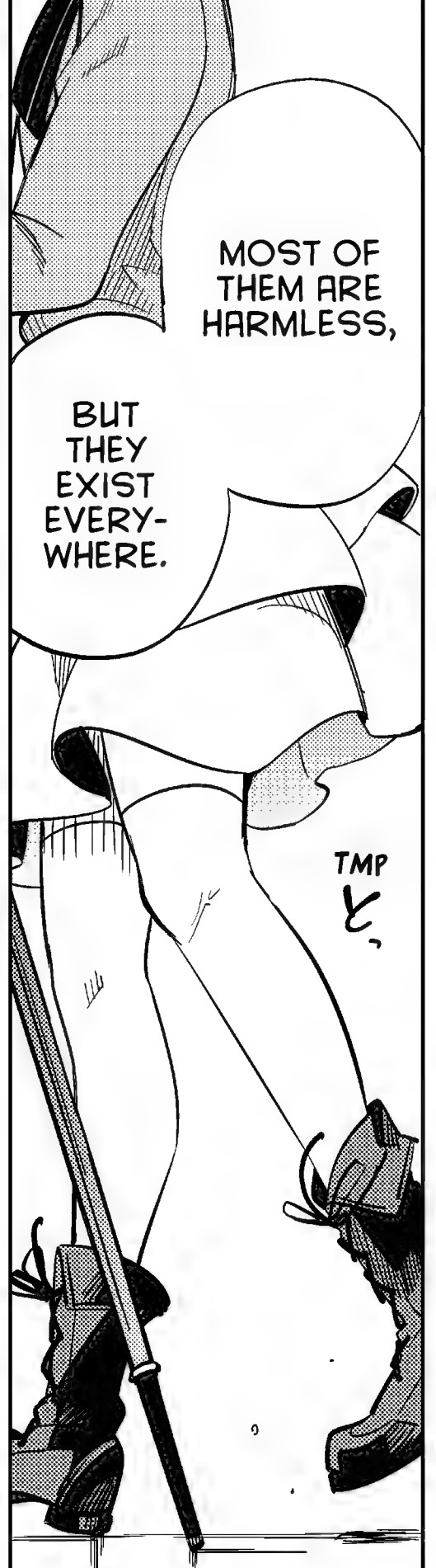
HOW CAN  
YOU BE SO  
SURE THESE  
THINGS  
EXIST?



"THAT—  
THAT  
THING..."

...IS  
TERRIFY-  
ING."

"THAT  
THING IS  
DIFFER-  
ENT."



MOST OF  
THEM ARE  
HARMLESS,

BUT  
THEY  
EXIST  
EVERY-  
WHERE.

TMP  
と、

AND WHEN  
*THEY* SEE YOU,  
THEY WHISPER  
TO ME.





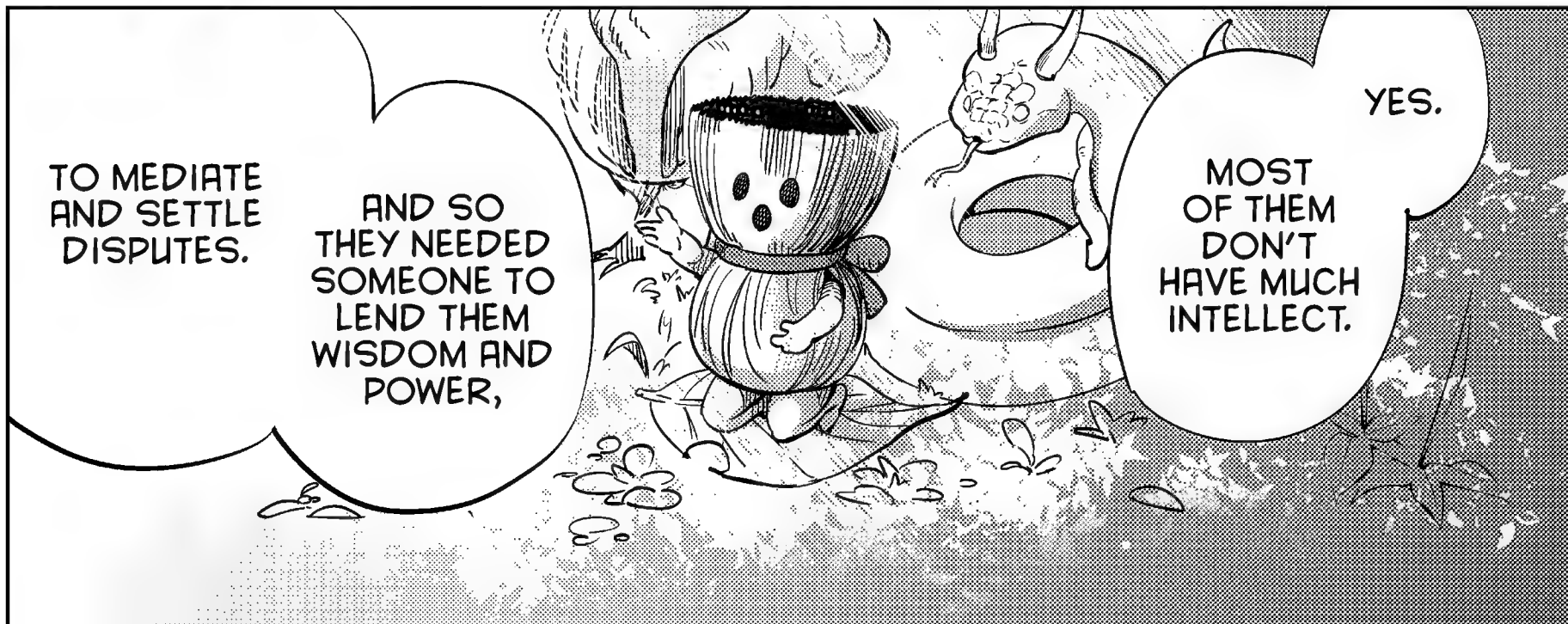
THEY TOOK  
ME DEEP INTO  
THE MOUNTAINS  
AND THEY  
ASKED ME...



"PLEASE,  
BE OUR GOD  
OF WISDOM."



GOD OF  
WISDOM?



TO MEDIATE  
AND SETTLE  
DISPUTES.

AND SO  
THEY NEEDED  
SOMEONE TO  
LEND THEM  
WISDOM AND  
POWER,

MOST  
OF THEM  
DON'T  
HAVE MUCH  
INTELLECT.

YES.

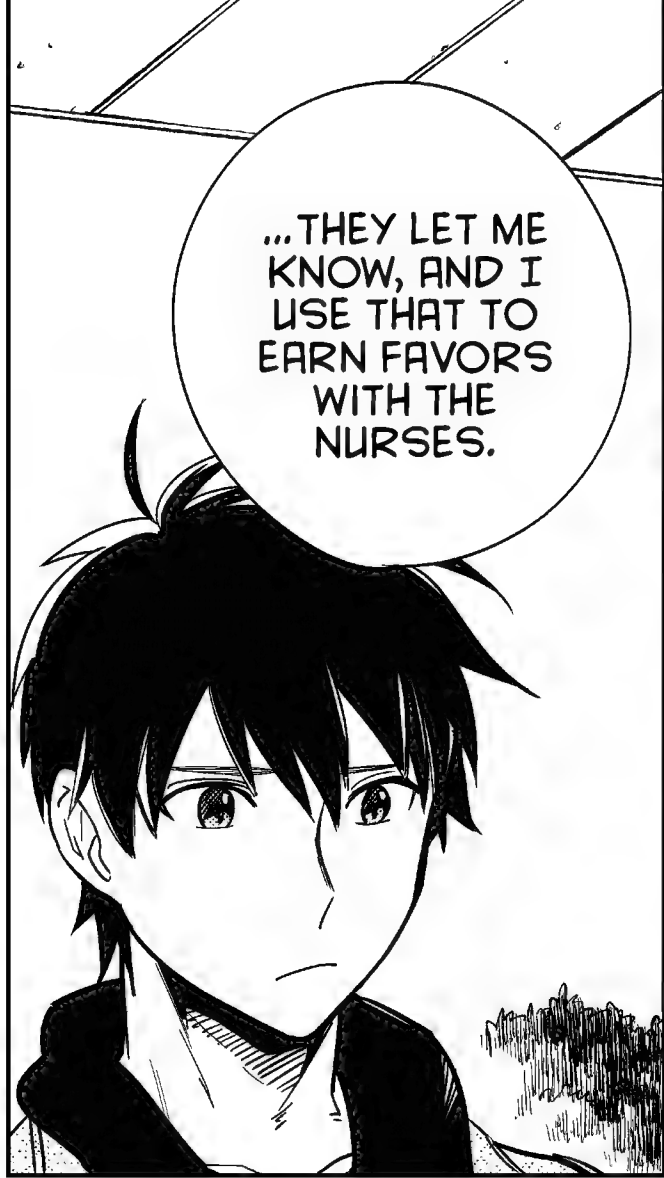


THEY  
KIDNAPPED  
ME FOR  
ABOUT TWO  
WEEKS WHEN  
I WAS 11.

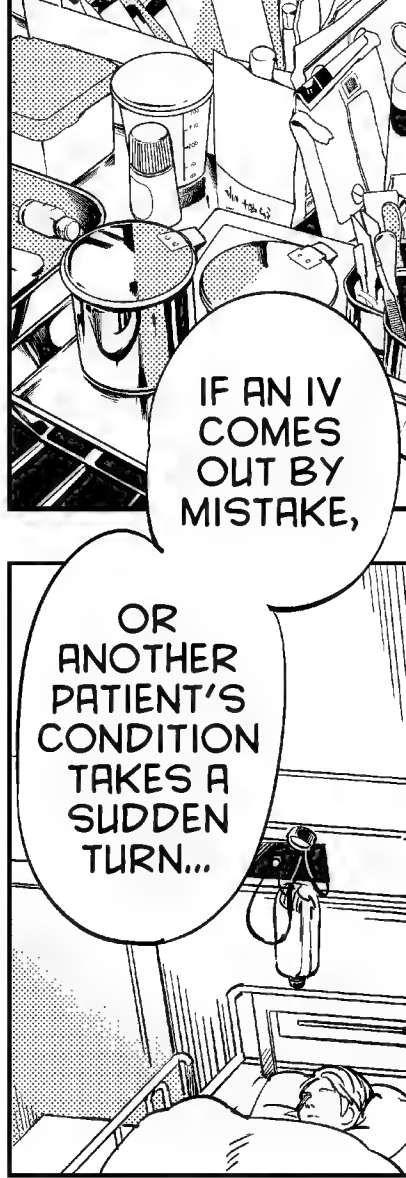








...THEY LET ME  
KNOW, AND I  
USE THAT TO  
EARN FAVORS  
WITH THE  
NURSES.



IF AN IV  
COMES  
OUT BY  
MISTAKE,

OR  
ANOTHER  
PATIENT'S  
CONDITION  
TAKES A  
SUDDEN  
TURN...



IF I FALL  
ASLEEP,  
THEY WAKE  
ME UP IN  
TIME FOR MY  
CHECKUP.

IF SOME-  
THING GETS  
LOST IN THE  
HOSPITAL,  
THEY'LL TELL  
ME WHERE  
IT IS.



SO YOU  
CAN LOOK  
IT UP IN THE  
NEWSPAPERS.  
JULY, SIX  
YEARS AGO.



**INDEED.**

KINDA  
HARD TO  
BELIEVE...

SHAKE

SHAKE

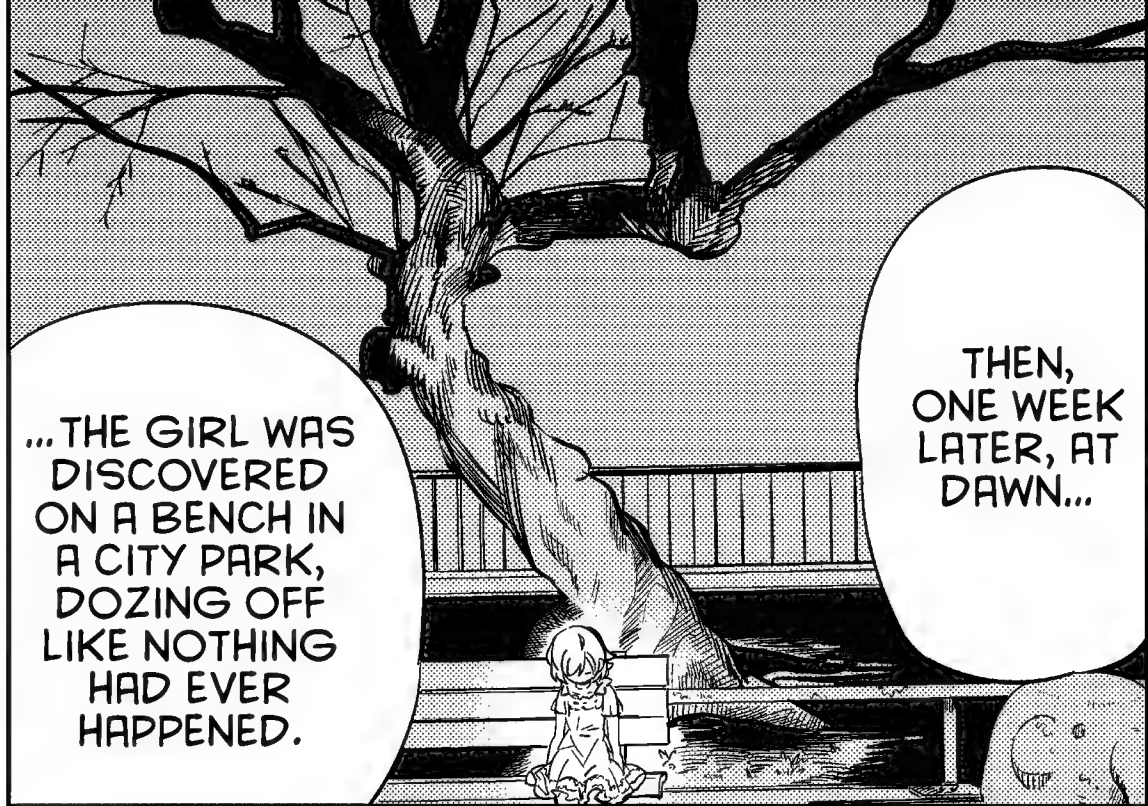


THEY EVEN  
RELEASED  
A PICTURE  
OF ME.

A FIFTH-  
GRADE  
GIRL NAMED  
KOTOKO  
IWANAGA  
WENT  
MISSING  
FROM THIS  
CITY.

ONE WEEK  
LATER, THE  
POLICE WENT  
PUBLIC WITH  
THE INVESTI-  
GATION.





...THE GIRL WAS DISCOVERED ON A BENCH IN A CITY PARK, DOZING OFF LIKE NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED.

THEN, ONE WEEK LATER, AT DAWN...



THE DETAILS WERE WITHHELD OUT OF CONSIDERATION FOR HER PRIVACY.

AND IT WASN'T FRONT-PAGE NEWS, BUT YOU'LL SURELY FIND IT IN SOME OF THE LOCAL PAPERS, WHERE THEY WROTE THE FOLLOWING...

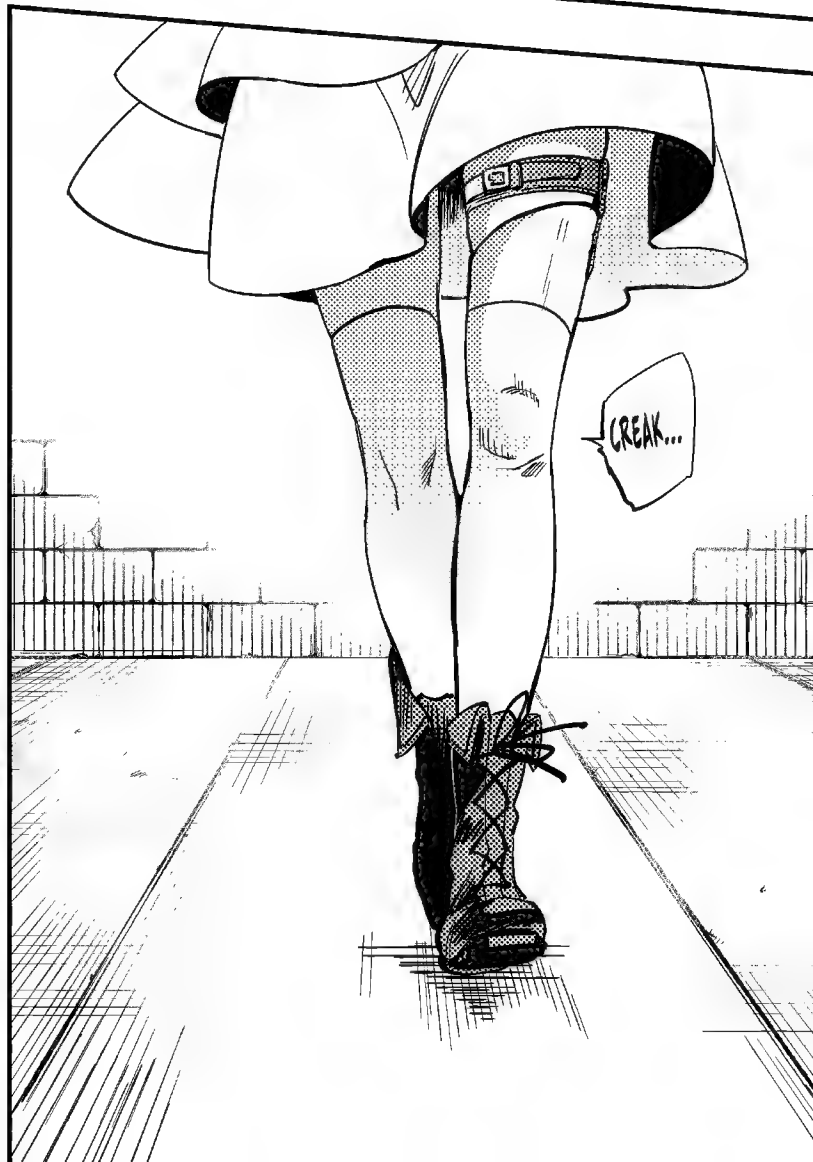
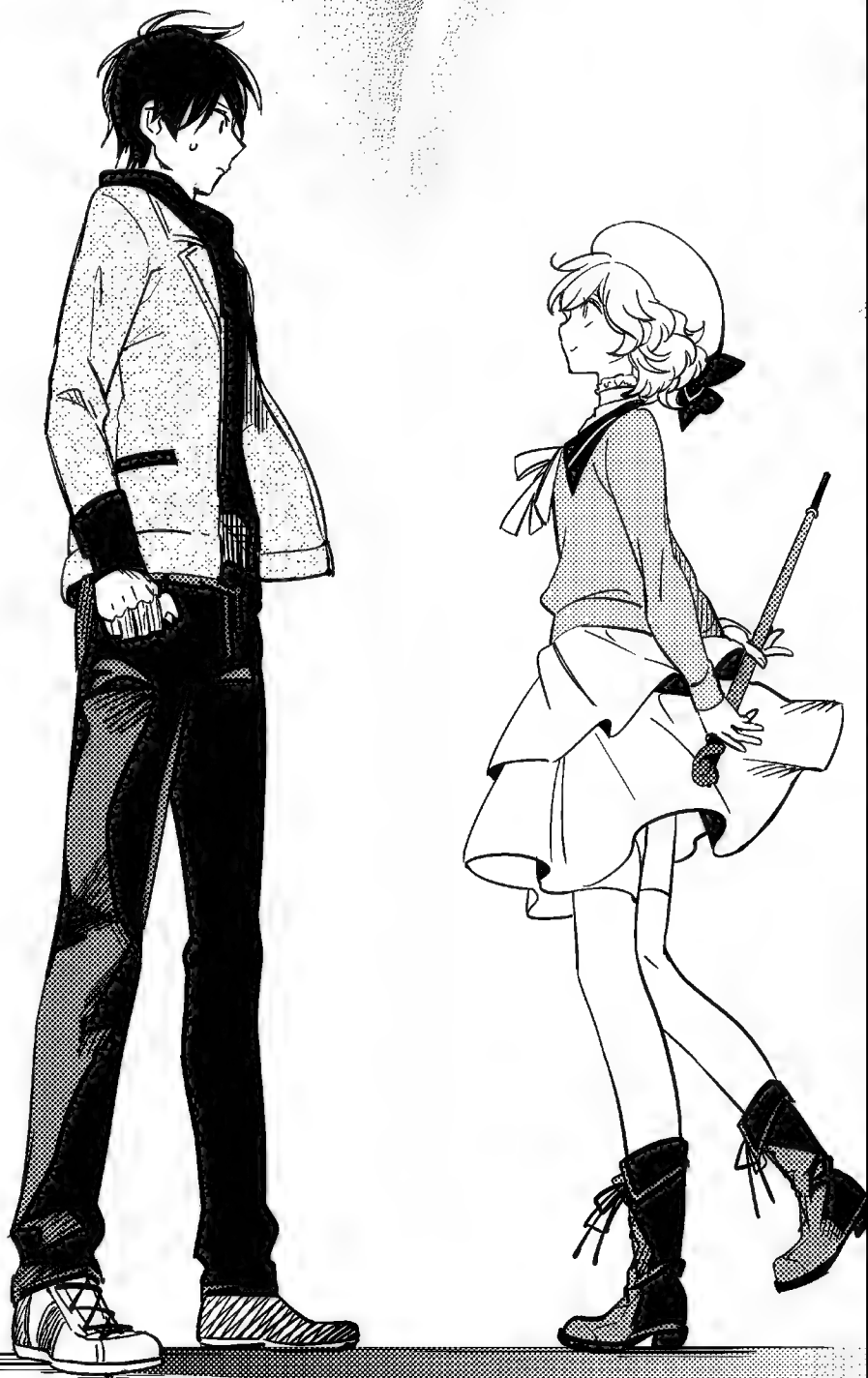


"WHEN THE GIRL WAS DISCOVERED, HER LEFT LEG WAS SEVERED, AND HER RIGHT EYE HAD BEEN REMOVED."

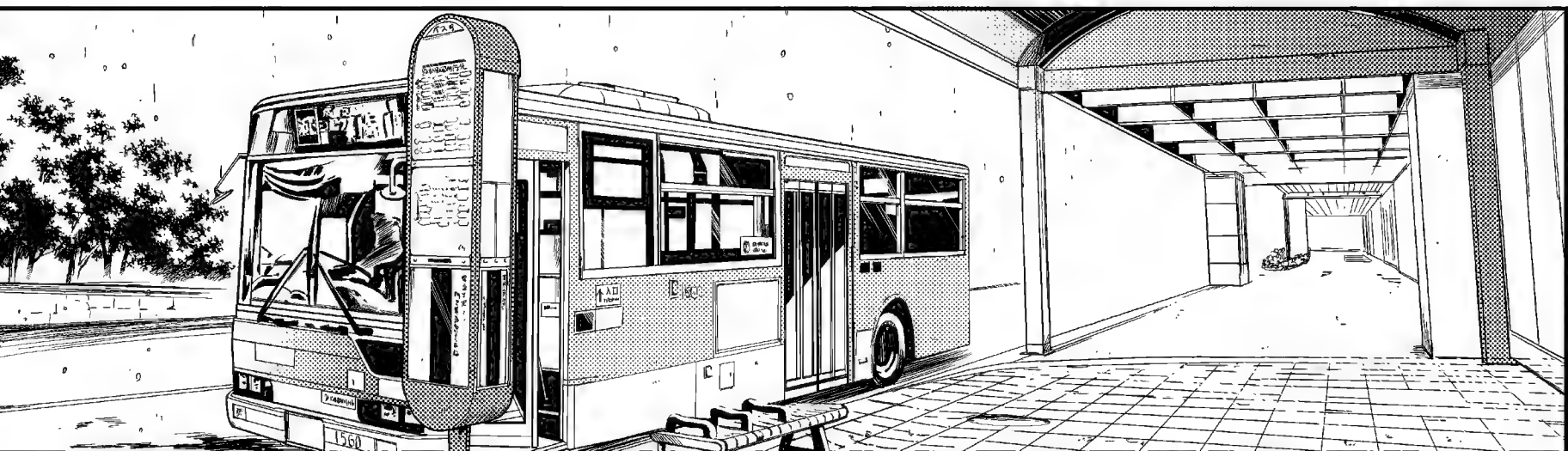


OF COURSE, THE PERPETRATOR WAS NEVER CAUGHT.

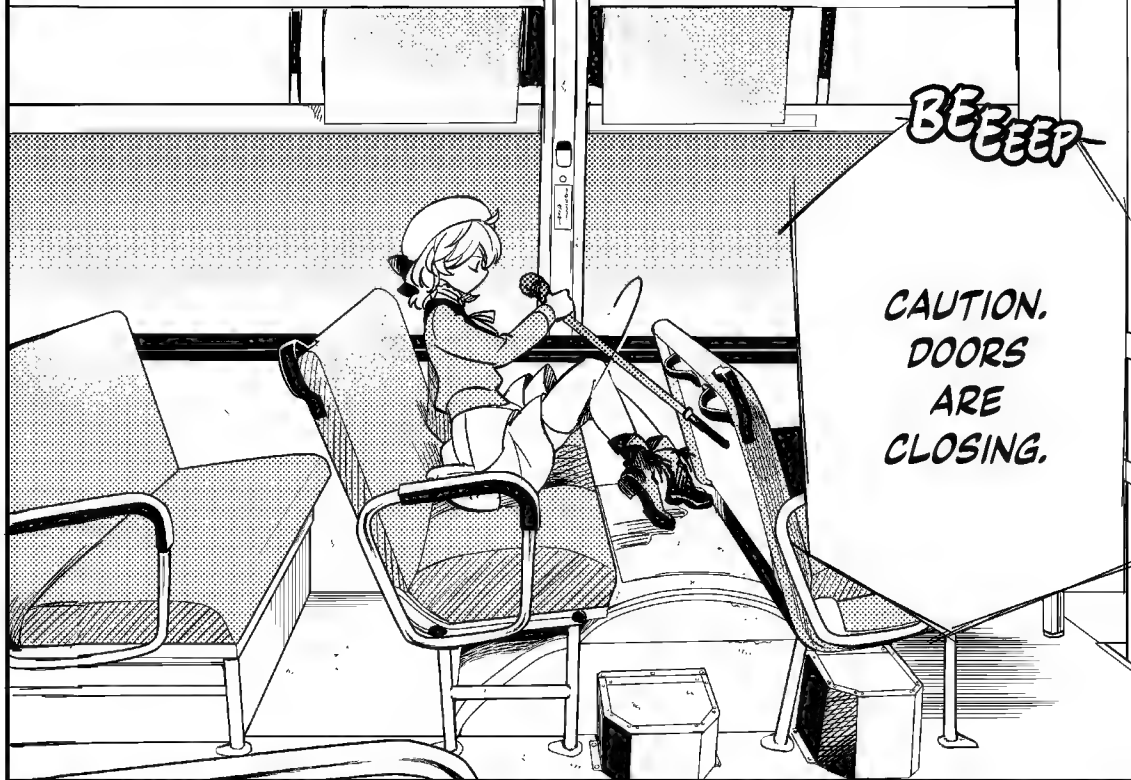
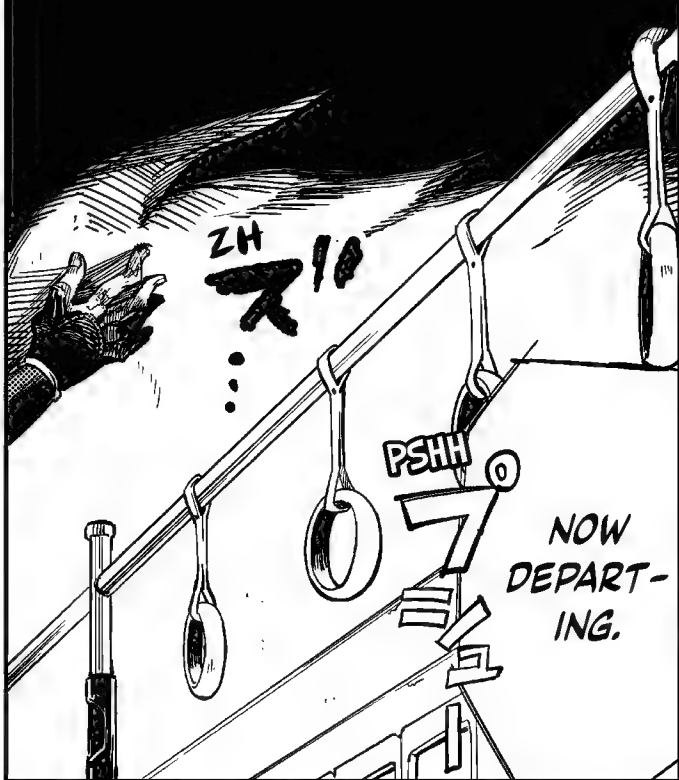
SINCE THEN, I HAVE BEEN THEIR GOD OF WISDOM.















I WAS OUT OF  
MY WITS WITH  
FEAR—I WAS  
AFRAID HE  
MIGHT EAT YOU!



ARE YOU  
HURT, MY  
LADY? HE  
DID YOU  
NO HARM,  
I HOPE?

I HAVEN'T  
BEEN  
REJECTED  
YET, ALL  
RIGHT?

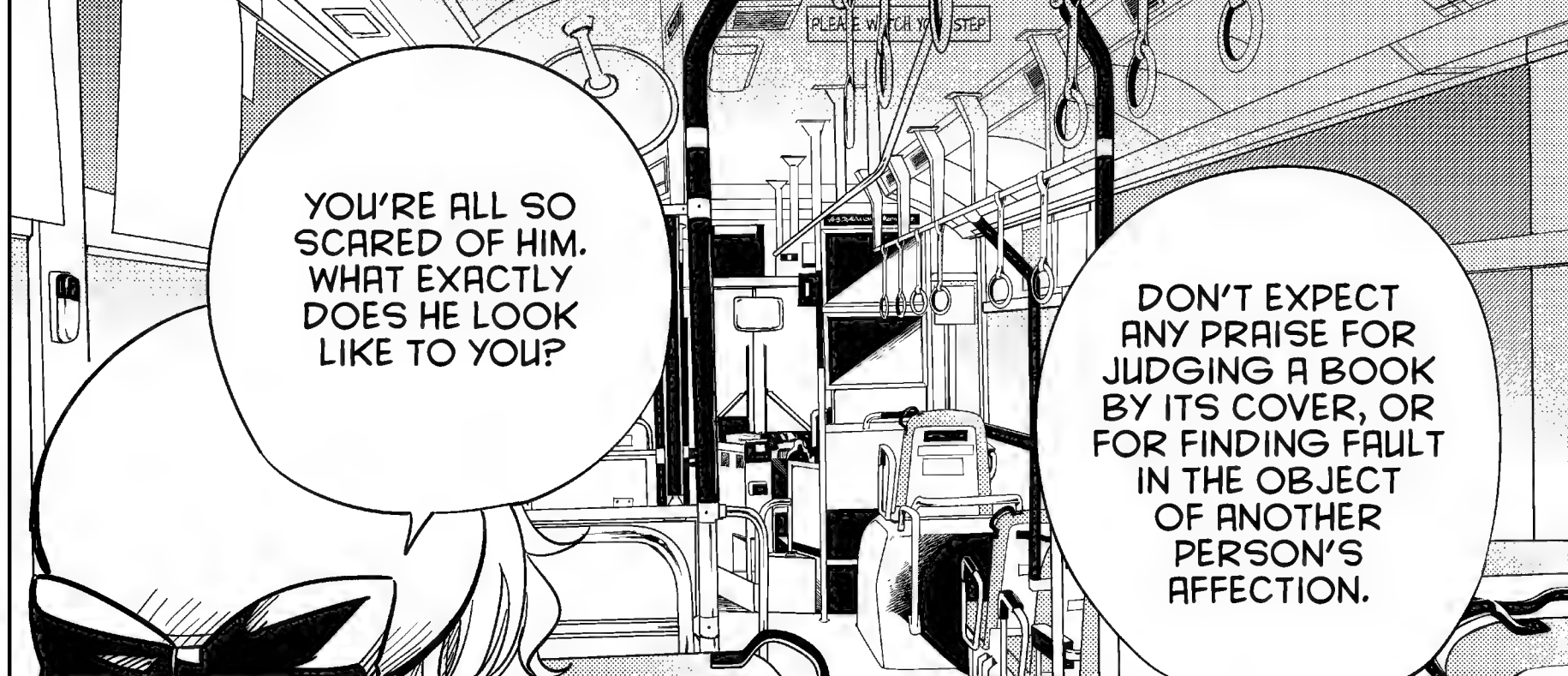
AND HE  
REJECTED  
OUR MOST  
NOBLE  
LADY! HIS  
INSOLENCE  
KNOWS NO  
BOUNDS.

WHAT  
CAN YOU  
POSSIBLY  
SEE IN THAT  
PUNGENT,  
TERRIFYING  
MONSTROS-  
ITY?

DON'T WORRY.  
HE DIDN'T LAY  
A FINGER ON  
ME, UNFORTU-  
NATELY.







YOU'RE ALL SO  
SCARED OF HIM.  
WHAT EXACTLY  
DOES HE LOOK  
LIKE TO YOU?

DON'T EXPECT  
ANY PRAISE FOR  
JUDGING A BOOK  
BY ITS COVER, OR  
FOR FINDING FAULT  
IN THE OBJECT  
OF ANOTHER  
PERSON'S  
AFFECTION.



...BUT TO ME,  
KURÔ-SAN  
FALLS INTO THE  
CATEGORY OF  
"HOTTIE."



SOMETHING  
DREADFUL!  
TERRIBLE!  
...FOUL-  
SMELLING!

THAT'S  
NOT VERY  
SPECIFIC,  
IS IT?

REEKING  
OF  
BLOOD!



HE MAY  
NOT FIT THE  
DEFINITION IN  
ANY OF YOUR  
EYES...





NO, I STILL HAVE SCADS OF ATTACHMENT TO THIS WORLD. I WOULD PREFER TO STAY.

OH, ARE YOU READY TO GO TO NIRVANA?

...UM, PLEASE DON'T TELL ME THAT SOME SCOUNDREL HAS TAKEN YOUR LEFT EYE AS WELL?



Look how cute he is, standing there after missing the bus...



I DO HOPE YOU WILL VANQUISH HIM STRAIGHT-AWAY.

BUT THAT RAPSCALLION REFUSES TO LEAVE THE LIBRARY, SO I MUST ALWAYS BE ON MY GUARD.

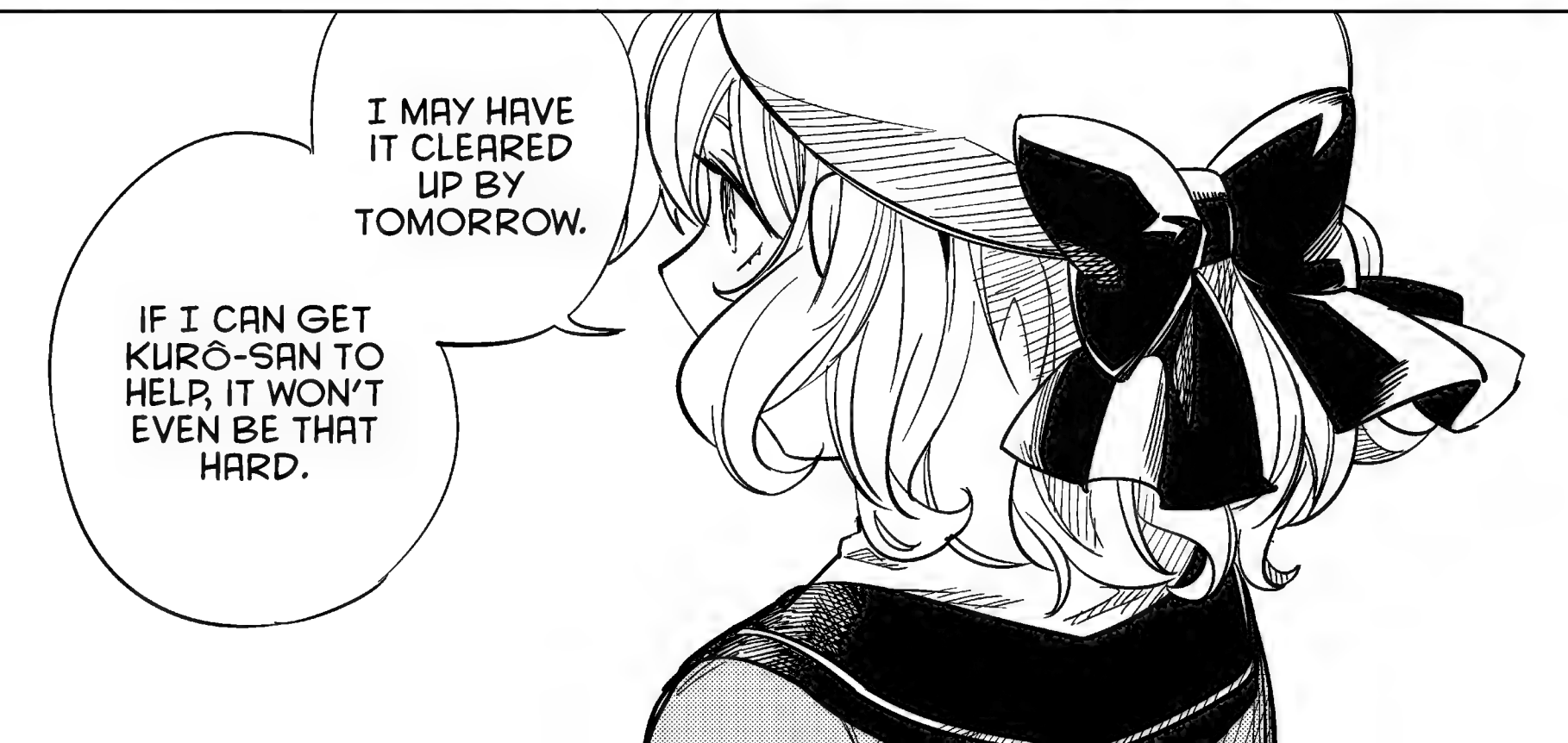
YES, ABOUT THAT...



THAT'S NOT WHAT I WOULD EXPECT FROM SOMEONE LIKE YOU.

I COULDN'T POSSIBLY PASS ON UNTIL I'VE ATTAINED MY GREATEST AMBITION OF READING EVERY HARLEQUIN NOVEL IN EXISTENCE.

GRIN



I MAY HAVE IT CLEARED UP BY TOMORROW.

IF I CAN GET KURÔ-SAN TO HELP, IT WON'T EVEN BE THAT HARD.





WHETHER  
HE BELIEVES  
ME OR NOT,  
HE KNOWS  
BETTER THAN  
ANYONE THAT  
I'M NOT  
NORMAL.

AT THE VERY  
LEAST, I'VE  
PIQUED HIS  
INTEREST.



BUT HE  
DIDN'T  
SEEM TO  
BELIEVE  
YOUR  
STORY, MY  
LADY.

THAT  
THING?

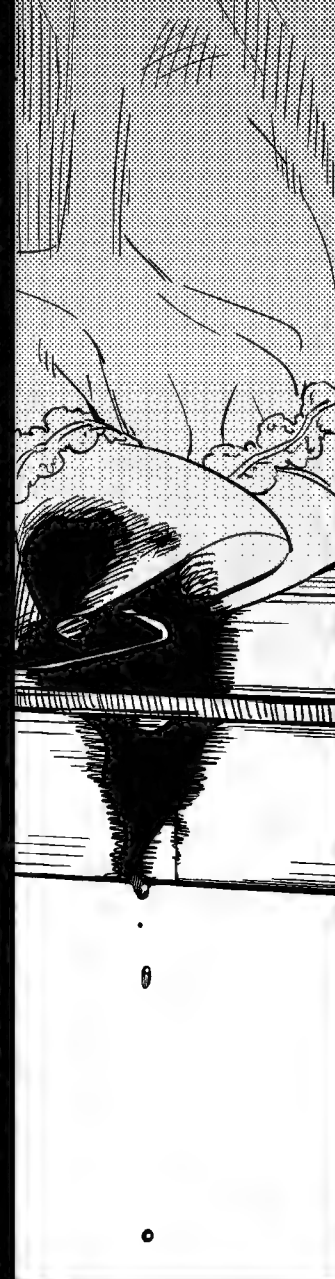
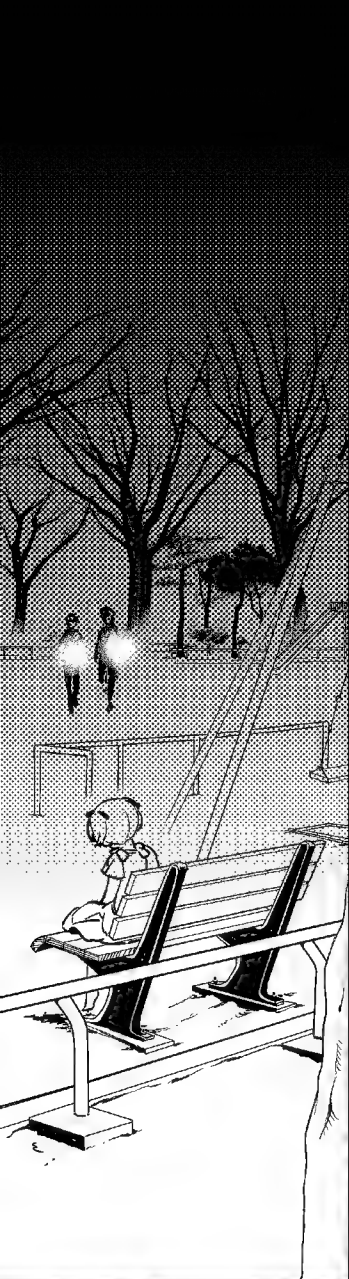


NOW  
IT'S UP  
TO HIM.

THE KOJIKI,  
WHICH IS SAID  
TO BE JAPAN'S  
OLDEST  
PIECE OF  
LITERATURE,  
MAKES MENTION  
OF A GOD BY  
THE NAME OF  
KUEBIKO.

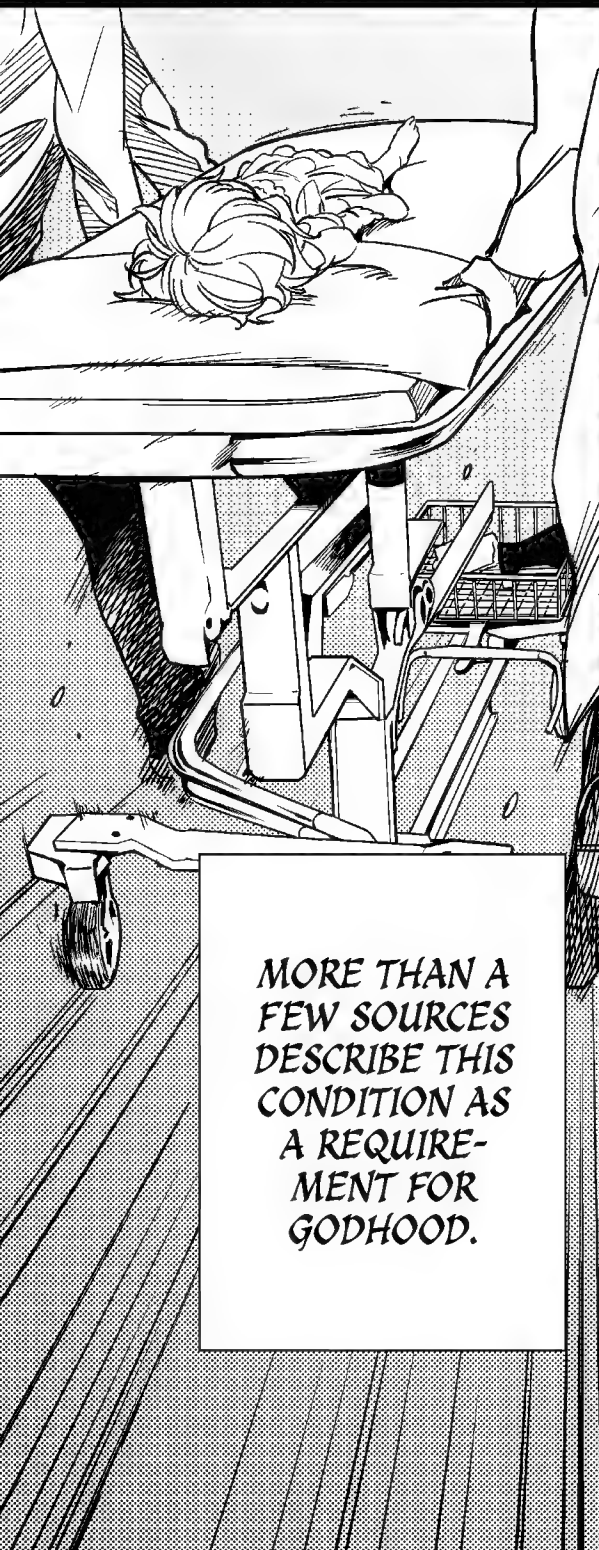






HE  
HAS ONE  
LEG AND  
CANNOT  
WALK.

BUT HE IS  
A GOD OF  
WISDOM  
WHO KNOWS  
MUCH ABOUT  
THE WORLD.



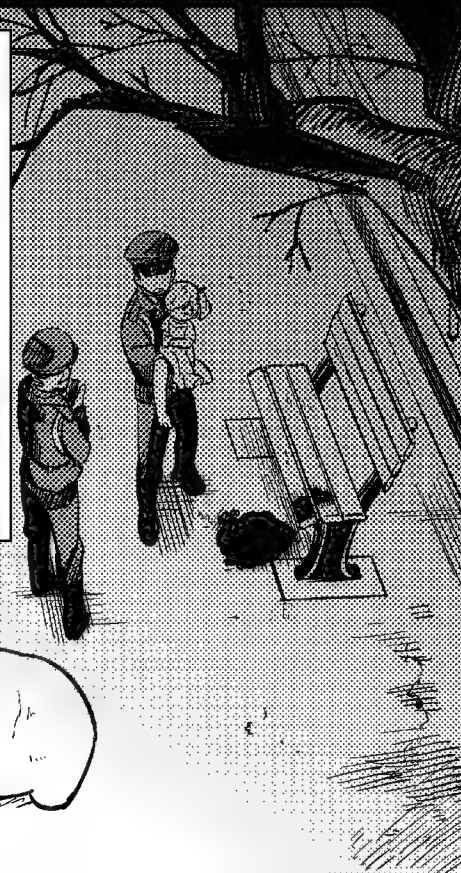
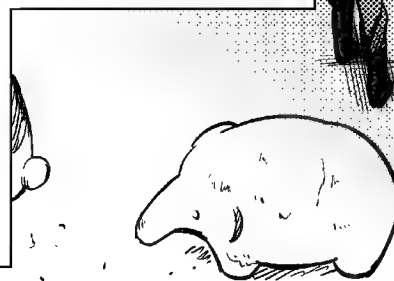
AND THOSE  
WHO HAVE  
ONLY ONE  
EYE HAVE  
SOMETIMES  
BEEN TREATED  
AS GODS OR  
SOMETHING  
VERY NEAR.

BECAUSE HE  
ONLY HAS  
ONE LEG, HE  
HAS BEEN  
ASSOCIATED  
WITH  
SCARECROWS.

MORE THAN A  
FEW SOURCES  
DESCRIBE THIS  
CONDITION AS  
A REQUIRE-  
MENT FOR  
GODHOOD.

AND  
THROUGHOUT  
THE WORLD,  
GODS OF  
THE FORGE  
HAVE BEEN  
DESCRIBED AS  
HAVING ONE  
EYE OR ONE  
LEG.

THERE ARE MANY  
INSTANCES WHERE,  
AS AN OFFERING TO  
THE GODS, A PERSON  
WAS CONSECRATED  
BY HAVING ONE  
OF THEIR EYES  
DAMAGED, SETTING  
THEM UP AS A  
LINK BETWEEN  
GODS AND MEN,





SURGERY IN PROGRESS

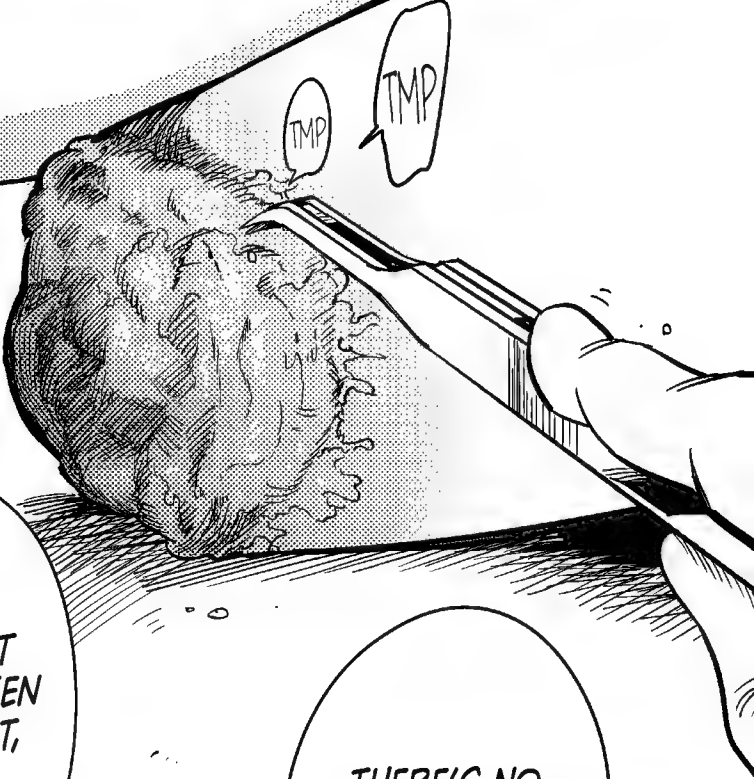
MANY  
TRADITIONS  
HAVE GODS  
WITH ONLY  
ONE EYE OR  
ONE LEG.

WHAT'S  
THIS  
SCAR?



IT'S NOT A  
CLEAN CUT,

BUT IT'S  
LIKE IT'S BEEN  
CAUTERIZED  
WITH SOME  
SORT OF  
ACID.



THERE'S NO  
NEED TO OPEN  
IT UP AND  
RE-TREAT IT.

HER RIGHT  
EYE HAS BEEN  
TAKEN OUT,  
TOO.

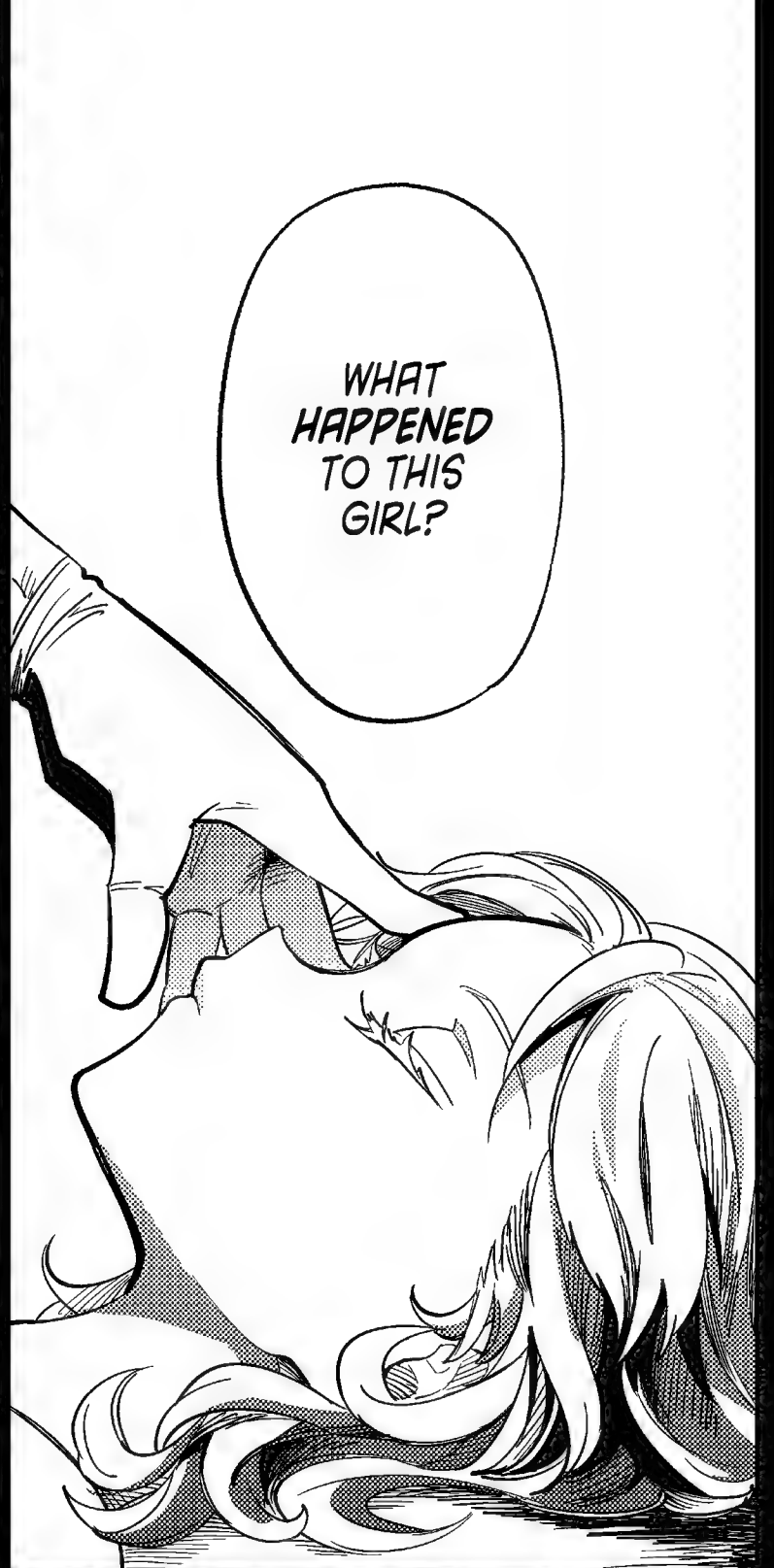
BUT  
THERE'S  
NO PUS OR  
SWELLING.  
IT'S ALMOST  
COMPLETELY  
HEALED.



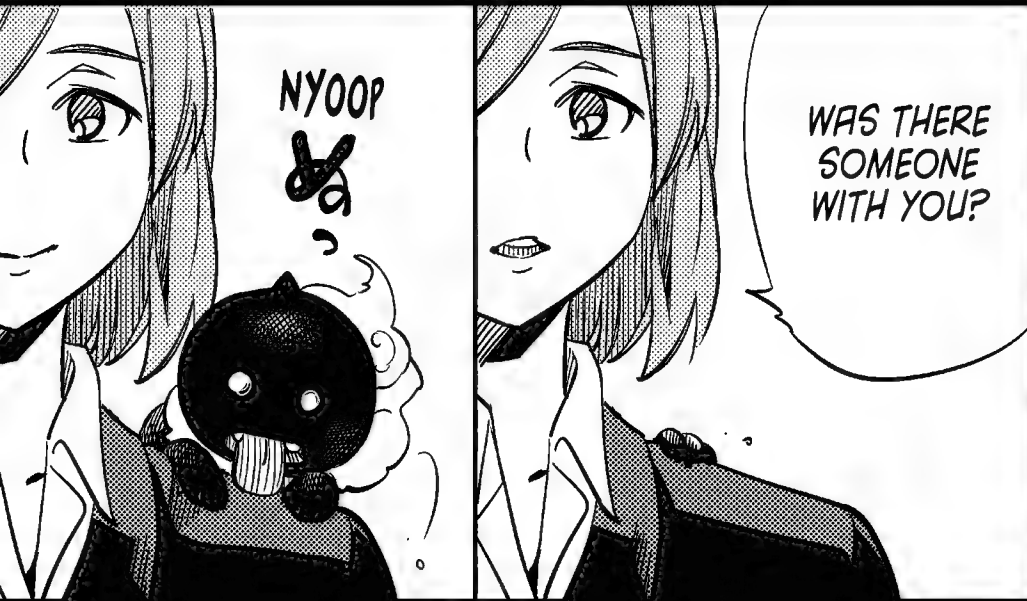




KOTOKO-CHAN,  
WHY DIDN'T YOU  
COME HOME FOR  
TWO WEEKS?



WHAT  
HAPPENED  
TO THIS  
GIRL?



NYOOP

WAS THERE  
SOMEONE  
WITH YOU?



THAT'S  
NOT A BAD  
TRADE.



SO THEY  
TOOK MY LEFT  
LEG AND MY  
RIGHT EYE...

...TO MAKE  
ME INTO A  
GOD?









YOUR PARENTS ARE  
WORRIED ABOUT  
YOU. THEY SAY  
WHEN IT'S RAINING,  
YOU'LL FALL ASLEEP  
ANYWHERE.



AND DON'T  
GO SLEEPING IN  
WEIRD PLACES  
AGAIN, OKAY?



WELL,  
SEE YOU  
NEXT TIME.  
IT'S RAINING,  
SO WATCH  
YOUR STEP.

OH.



Hee  
hee.

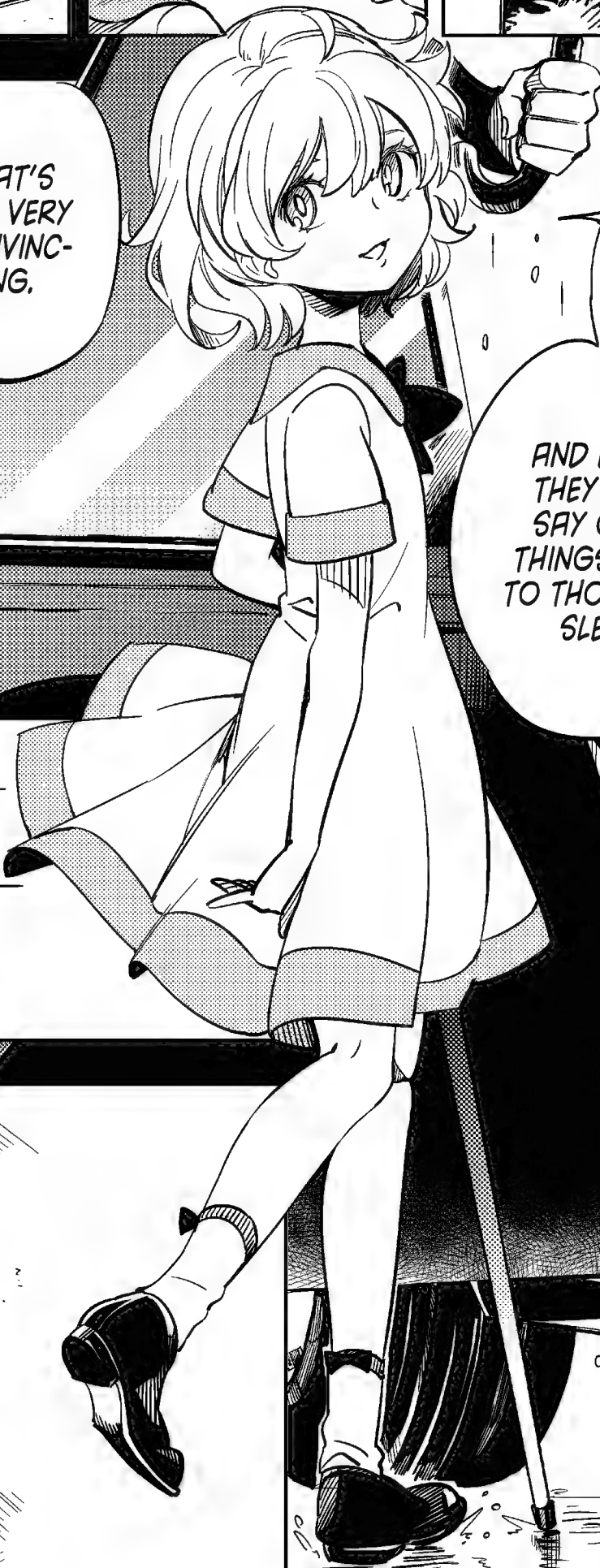
BUT IT'S  
VERY YOU,  
IWANAGA-  
SAN.

THAT'S  
NOT VERY  
CONVINC-  
ING.



CLACK

CLACK

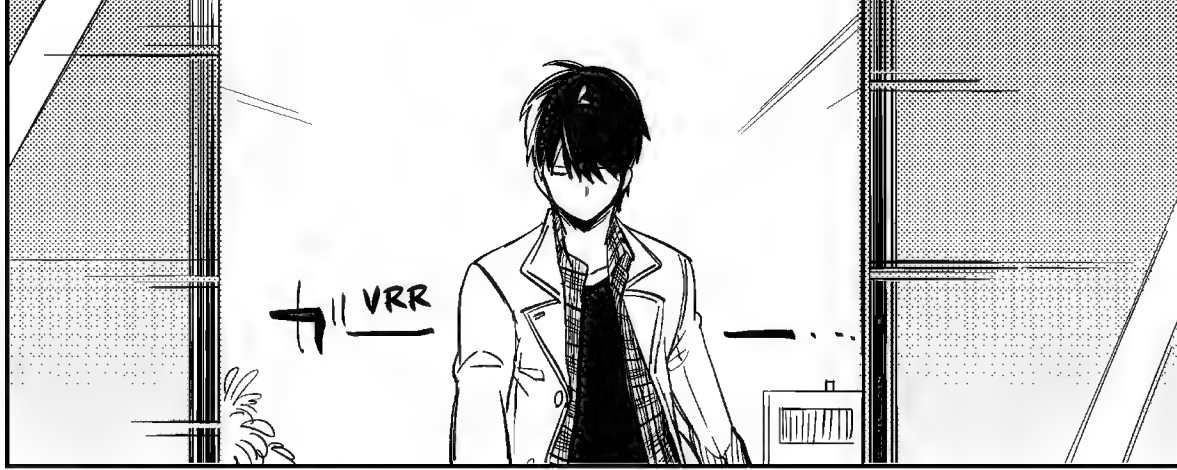


WELL, THEY DO  
SAY A CHILD  
WELL-SLEPT  
IS A CHILD  
WELL-KEPT.

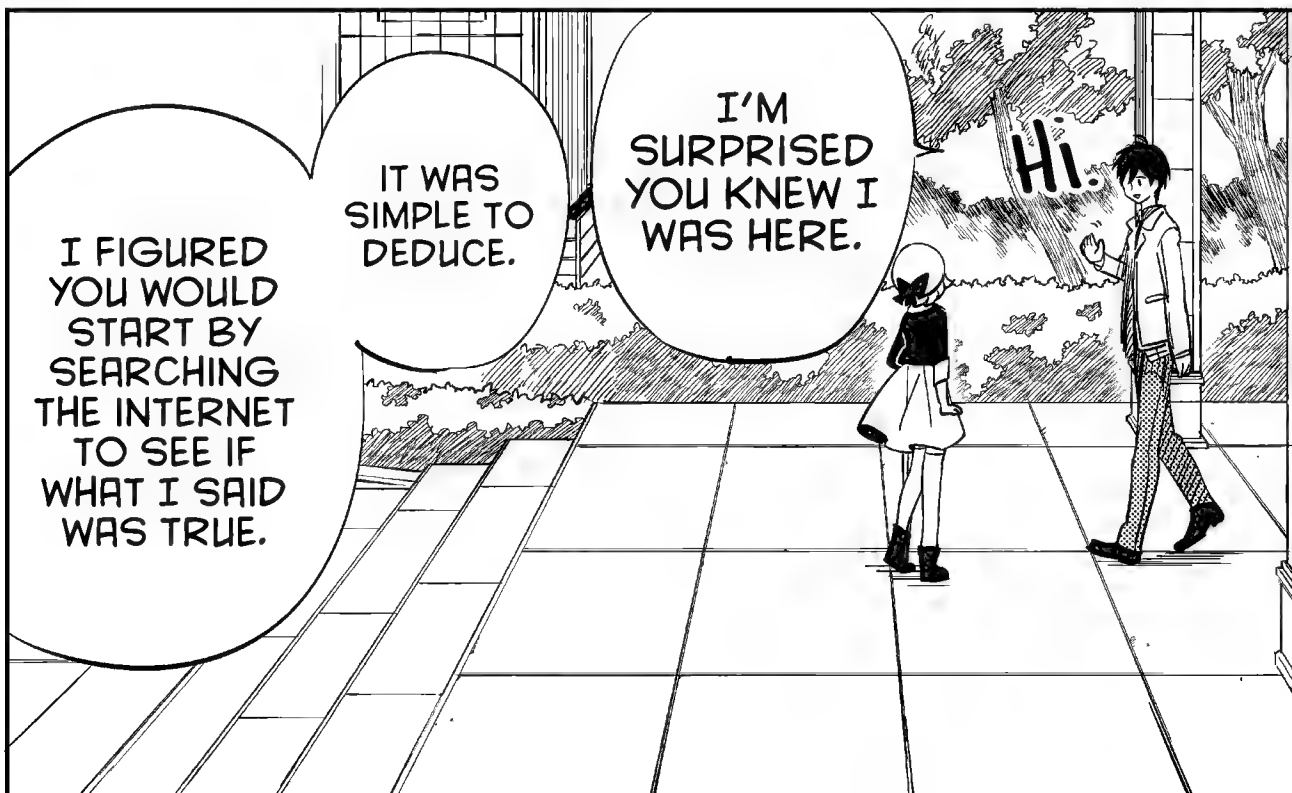
AND DON'T  
THEY ALSO  
SAY GOOD  
THINGS COME  
TO THOSE WHO  
SLEEP?





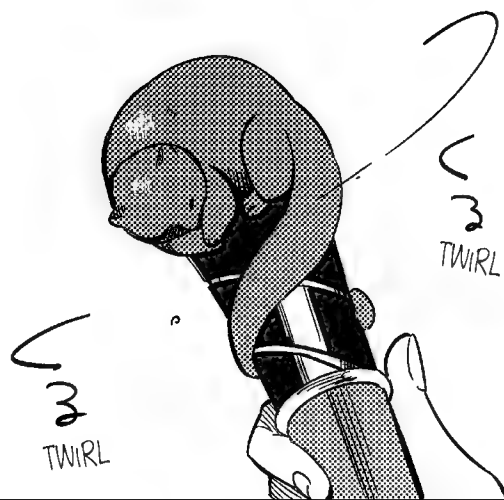


LOOKS  
LIKE THINGS  
ARE GOING  
JUST AS I  
PREDICTED.





IN ADDITION,  
THE CASE WAS  
UNSOLVED.  
PUT IT ALL  
TOGETHER, AND  
THAT MEANS YOU  
WON'T GET A  
LOT OF HITS.



BUT THE  
INCIDENT WAS  
SIX YEARS AGO,  
THE VICTIM WAS  
A MINOR, AND  
SHE DIDN'T DIE.

ONE THING  
THE INTERNET  
*WILL* TELL  
YOU IS THE  
DATE OF THE  
INCIDENT,

SO FINDING  
THE PRINTED  
ARTICLES AT  
THE LIBRARY  
WOULDN'T TAKE  
THAT MUCH  
EFFORT.

FURTHER-  
MORE,  
INTERNET  
ARTICLES  
ARE UNRELI-  
ABLE.

A PRUDENT  
INDIVIDUAL  
WOULD WANT  
TO CHECK  
THE ACTUAL  
NEWSPAPER  
ARTICLES TO  
BE SURE.

WHAT DID  
YOU FIND?

WELL  
?

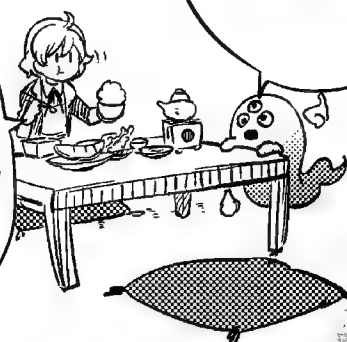
AND, AFTER  
ESTIMATING THE  
TIME YOU WOULD NEED  
TO FINISH YOUR RE-  
SEARCH AND LEAVE THE  
BUILDING, I GATHERED  
THAT YOU WOULD BE  
COMING OUT RIGHT  
ABOUT NOW.

ONE HOUR  
AGO

HE WAS  
IN THE  
LIBRARY.

...LET'S  
GO WITH  
THAT.

NICE  
WORK!



Bluffing  
is an  
important  
skill!







I'M ASHAMED  
TO SAY IT, BUT  
OTHER THAN  
LOSING MY  
RIGHT EYE,  
MY FACE HASN'T  
CHANGED  
SINCE GRADE  
SCHOOL.



AND THE  
PICTURE THEY  
RELEASED TO  
THE PUBLIC  
LOOKED JUST  
LIKE YOU.

IT'S A  
FACT THAT A  
GIRL NAMED  
KOTOKO  
IWANAGA  
SUFFERED  
A HORRIFIC  
INCIDENT SIX  
YEARS AGO.



IT DOESN'T  
PROVE THAT  
YOU'VE BECOME  
A GOD TO EVERY  
MONSTER OR  
YÔKAI.

BUT  
THAT'S  
ALL.



BUT IF IT  
IS A DELUSION,  
THEN I'M JUST A  
GIRL WHO WAS  
KIDNAPPED BY  
SOME DEVIANT,

AND LOST  
HER MIND  
FROM THE  
SHOCK OF  
HIS ABUSE.

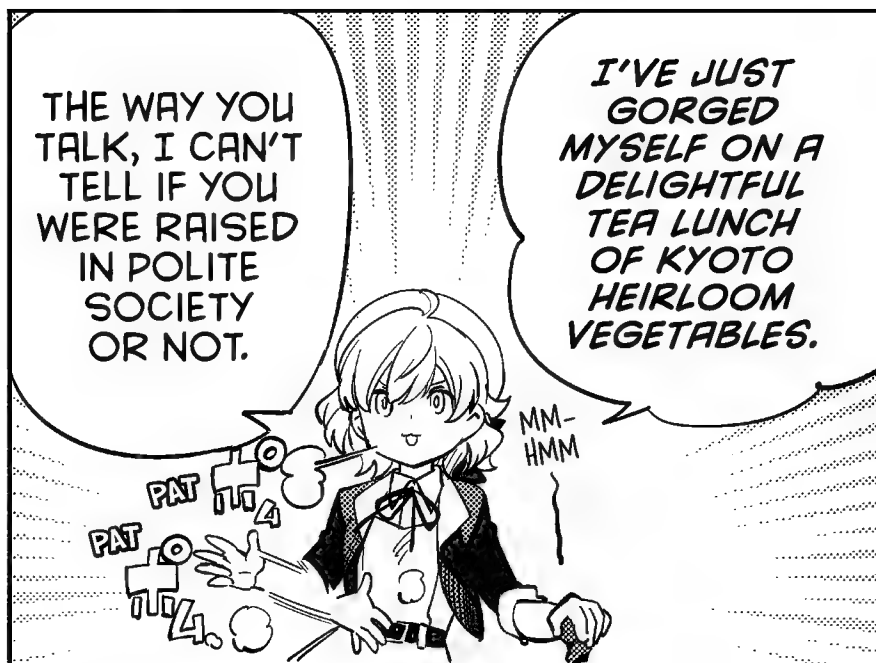
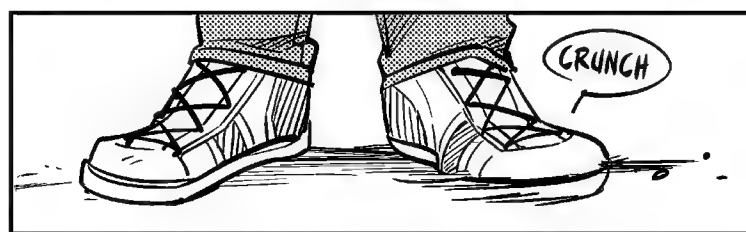
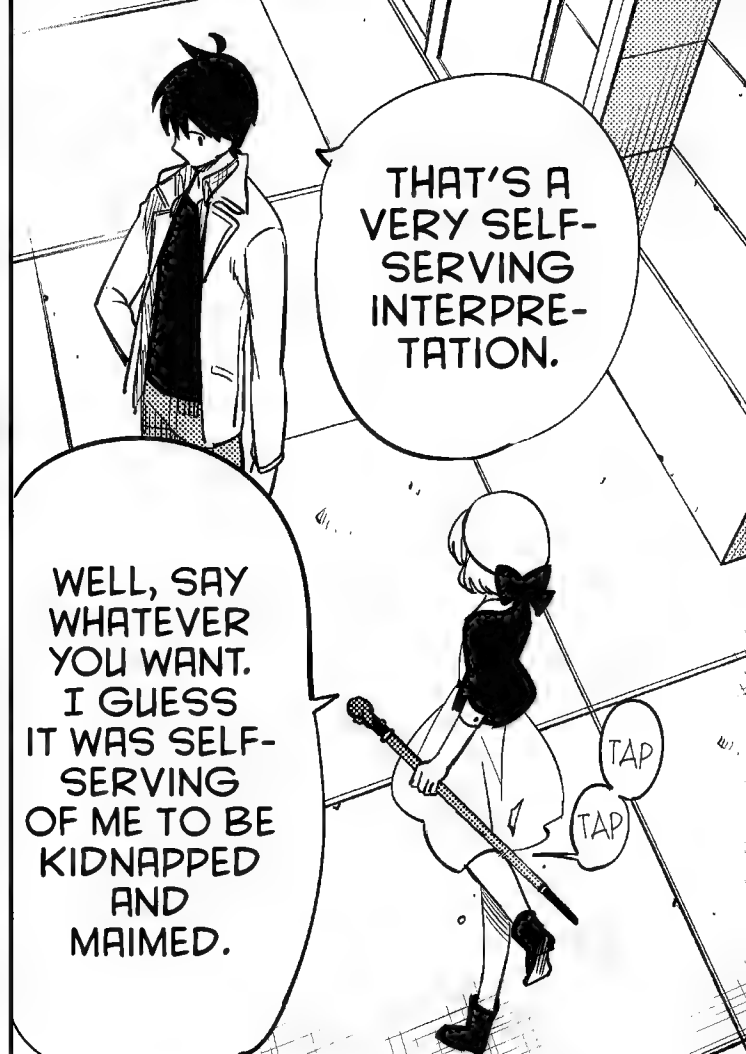
I MAY  
HAVE  
IMAGINED  
THE WHOLE  
THING.

NO, IT  
DOESN'T.

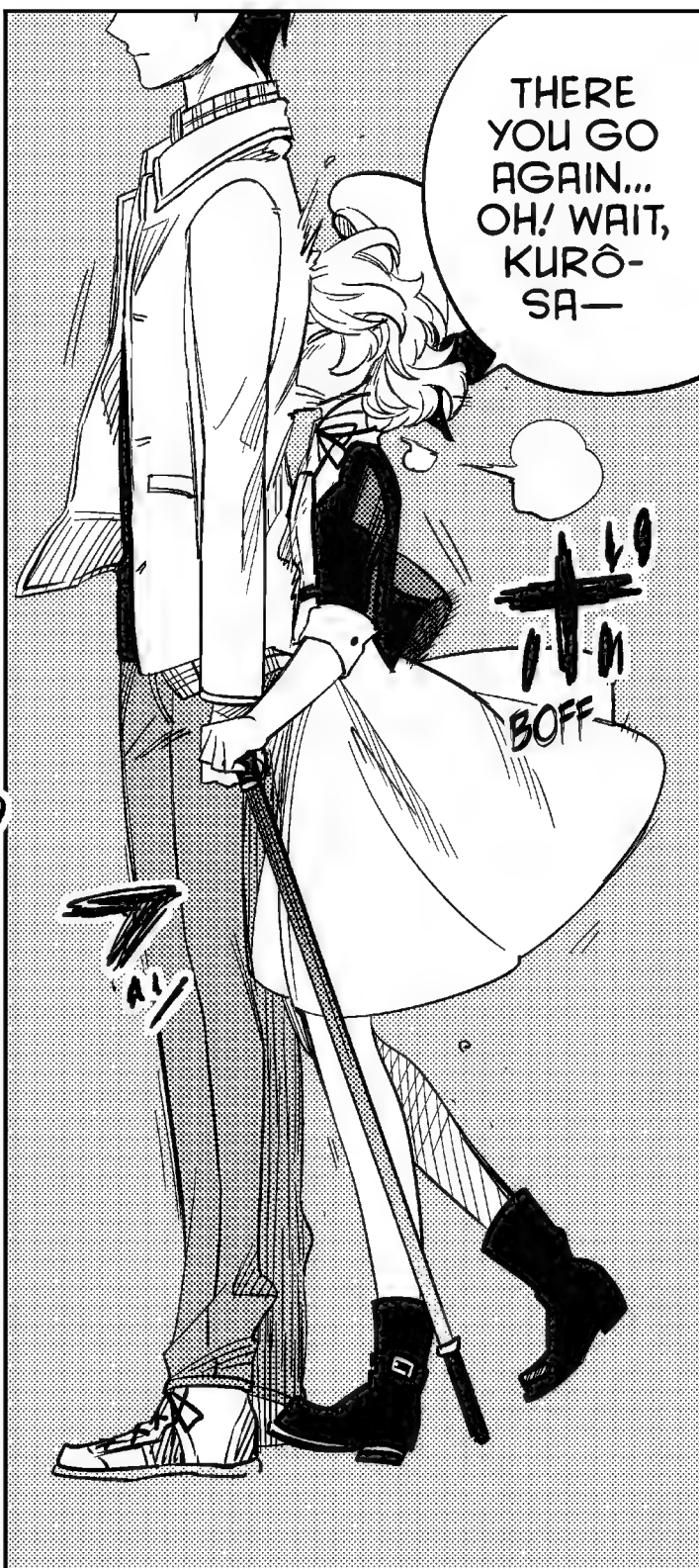








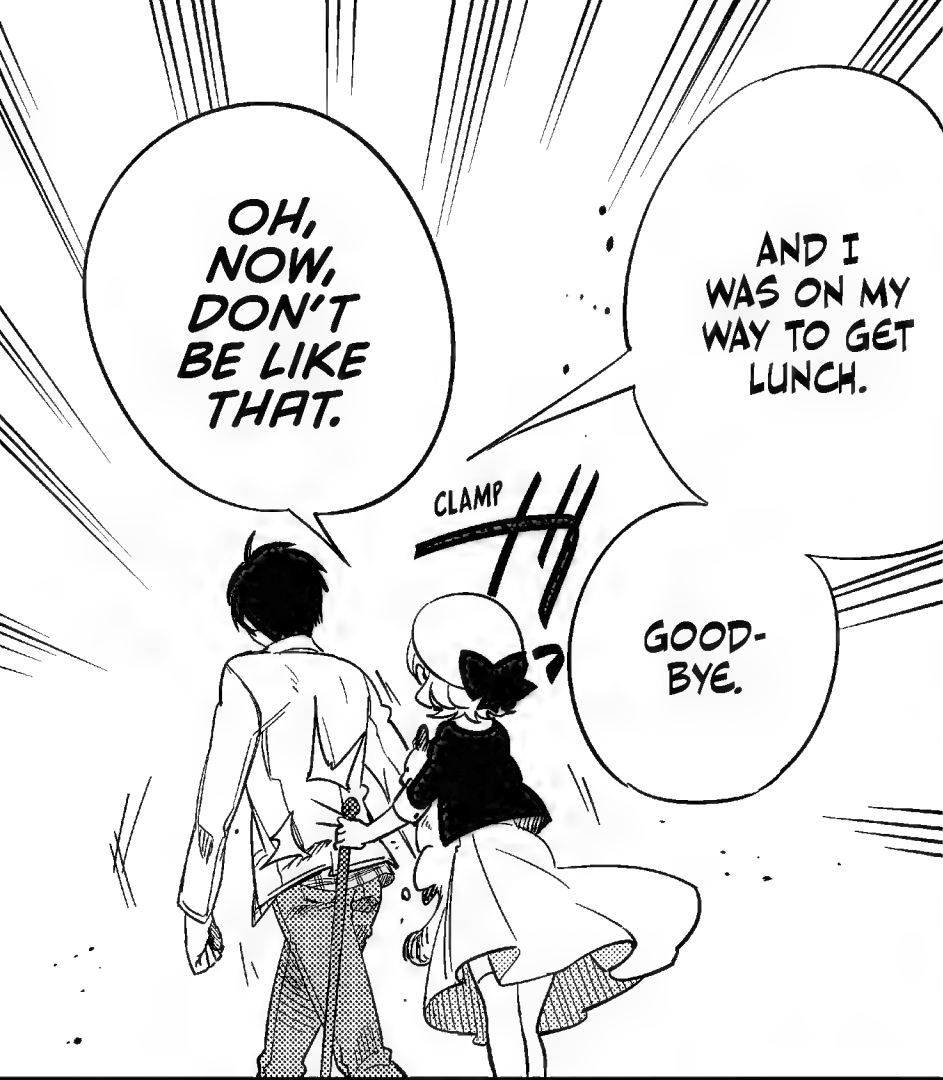












OH,  
NOW,  
DON'T  
BE LIKE  
THAT.

AND I  
WAS ON MY  
WAY TO GET  
LUNCH.

CLAMP

GOOD-  
BYE.



THAT'S  
OKAY.

ALL MY  
DOUBTS WERE  
GONE THE  
SECOND I SAW  
A GUY CHANGE  
INTO A TANUKI  
AND ASK YOU  
FOR HELP.

I BELIEVE  
YOU.



TOMORROW'S  
PAPERS MIGHT  
HAVE AN ARTICLE  
ABOUT A ONE-EYED,  
ONE-LEGGED  
GIRL WHO WAS  
SLAUGHTERED AT  
THE LIBRARY.

THE YÔKAI IN  
THE LIBRARY  
IS VERY CRUEL  
AND VICIOUS.



WOULD  
YOU EVER  
BE ABLE TO  
ESCAPE THE  
GUILT?

AND  
SHOULD  
THAT  
HAPPEN,  
YOU MAY  
BE THE  
ONLY ONE  
WHO KNOWS  
OF THE REAL  
KILLER...

A GIRL WHO  
CONFESSED  
HER LOVE  
TO YOU—  
ALTHOUGH SHE  
MAY NOT BE  
YOUR TYPE—  
COULD MEET  
HER TRAGIC  
END.





I DON'T  
KNOW  
WHAT'S  
"CONVEN-  
TIONAL"  
AT TIMES  
LIKE THIS!

THANKS  
SO MUCH  
FOR YOUR  
HELP.

BUT I'M  
NOT QUITE  
SATISFIED  
WITH THIS  
MANNER OF  
CARRIAGE.

AT A TIME  
LIKE THIS,  
WOULDN'T  
IT BE MORE  
CONVEN-  
TIONAL TO  
CRADLE ME  
IN YOUR  
ARMS?

BUT I CAN  
WALK JUST  
FINE ON MY  
PROSTHETIC  
LEG. I CAN  
RUN 50  
METERS IN  
UNDER TEN  
SECONDS.

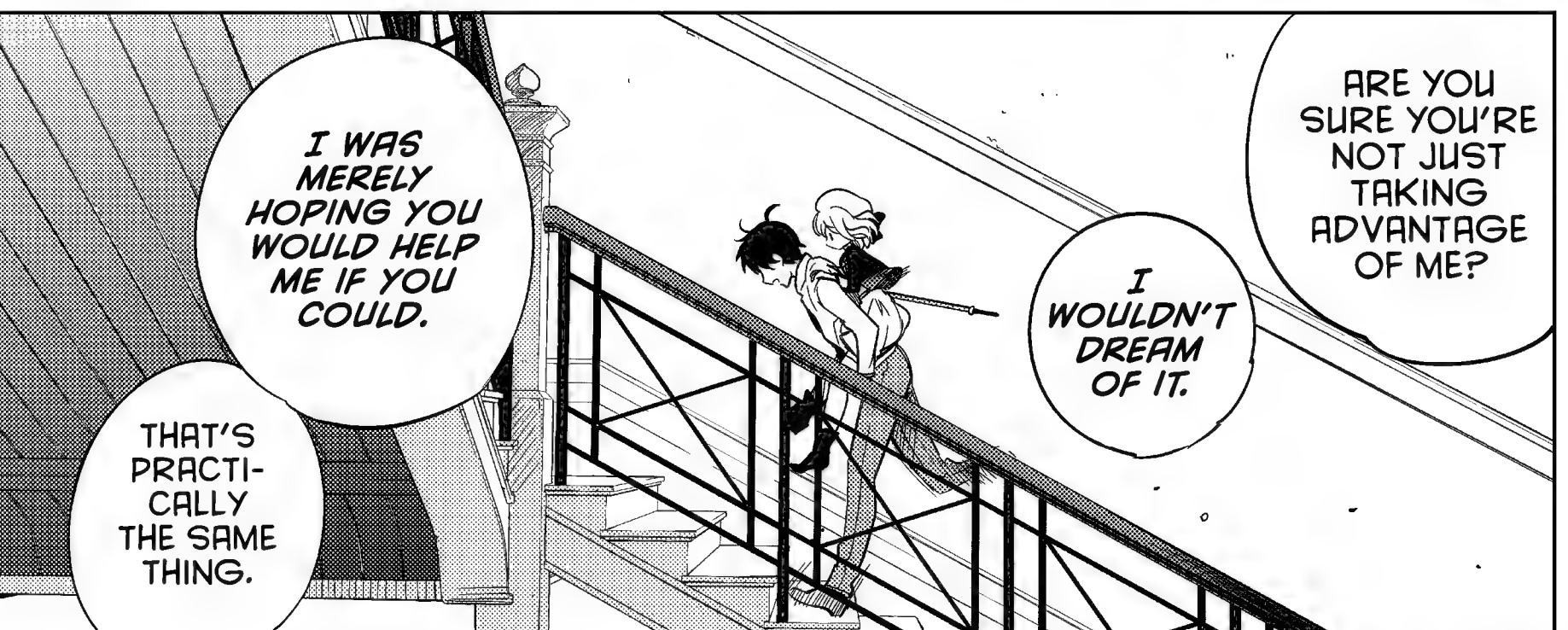
I ONLY USE  
THE CANE  
BECAUSE  
MY MOTHER  
AND FATHER  
WORRY.

YES.

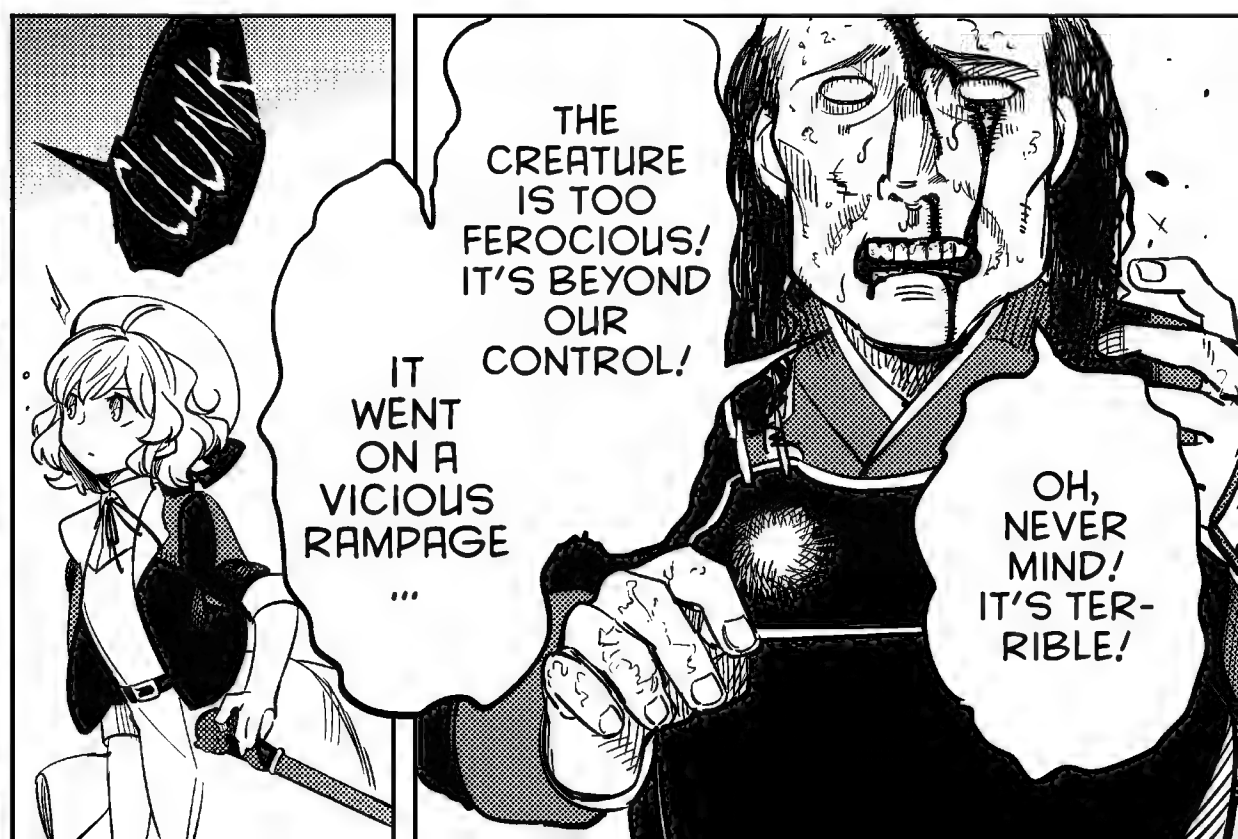
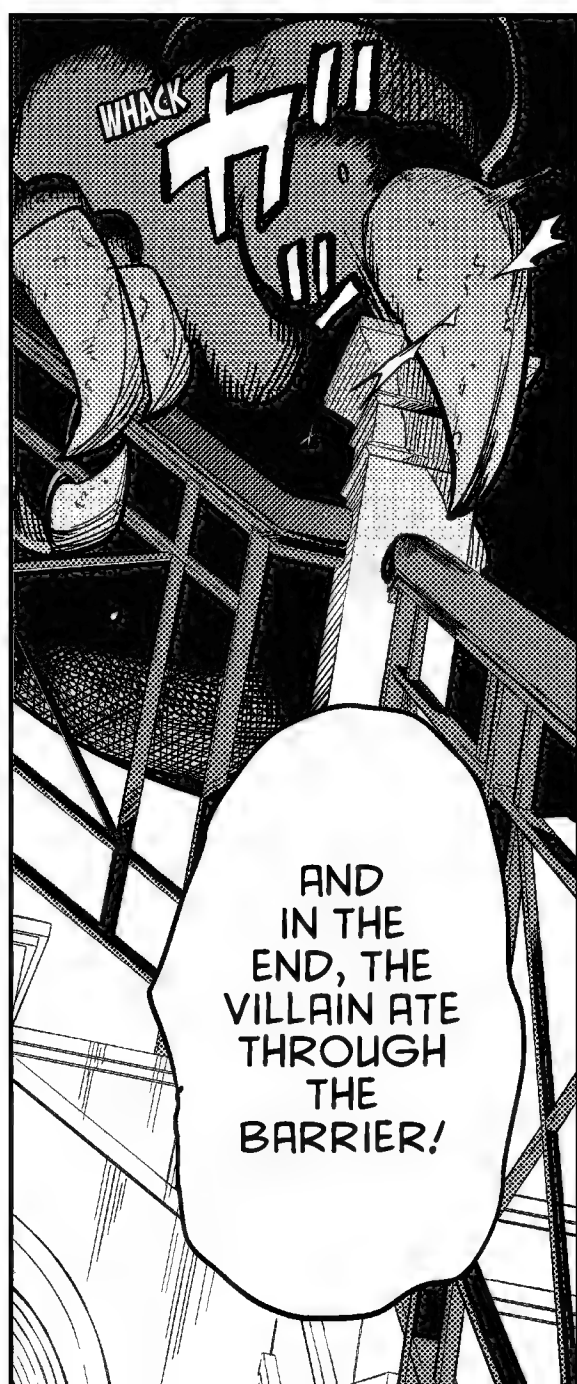
AND  
I JUST  
THOUGHT  
OF SOME-  
THING.

IF YOU  
CAUGHT ME  
WHEN I WAS  
ABOUT TO FALL  
OVER, DOESN'T  
THAT MEAN  
YOU ACTUALLY  
HAVE PRETTY  
GOOD LEG  
STRENGTH?













ALL RIGHT,  
THAT'S  
ENOUGH.



IN THE  
WORLDS  
OF MAN  
AND SPIRIT,  
ORDER  
MUST BE  
MAINTAINED.

I CANNOT  
ALLOW  
ANYONE TO  
DISREGARD  
THE LAWS  
OF REA...

... SON...

THACK

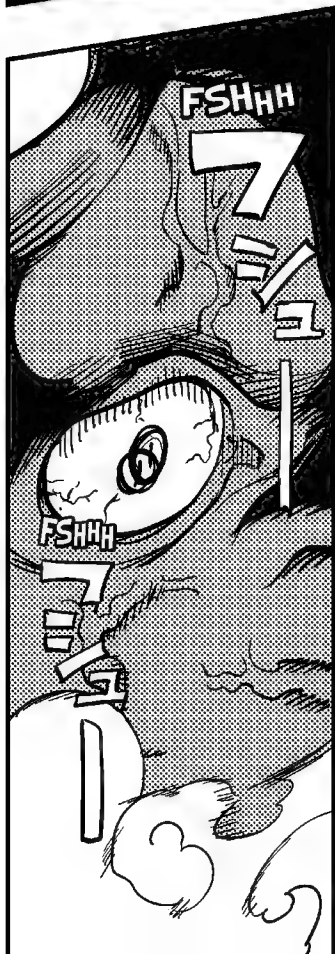
LUNGE

CLAMP

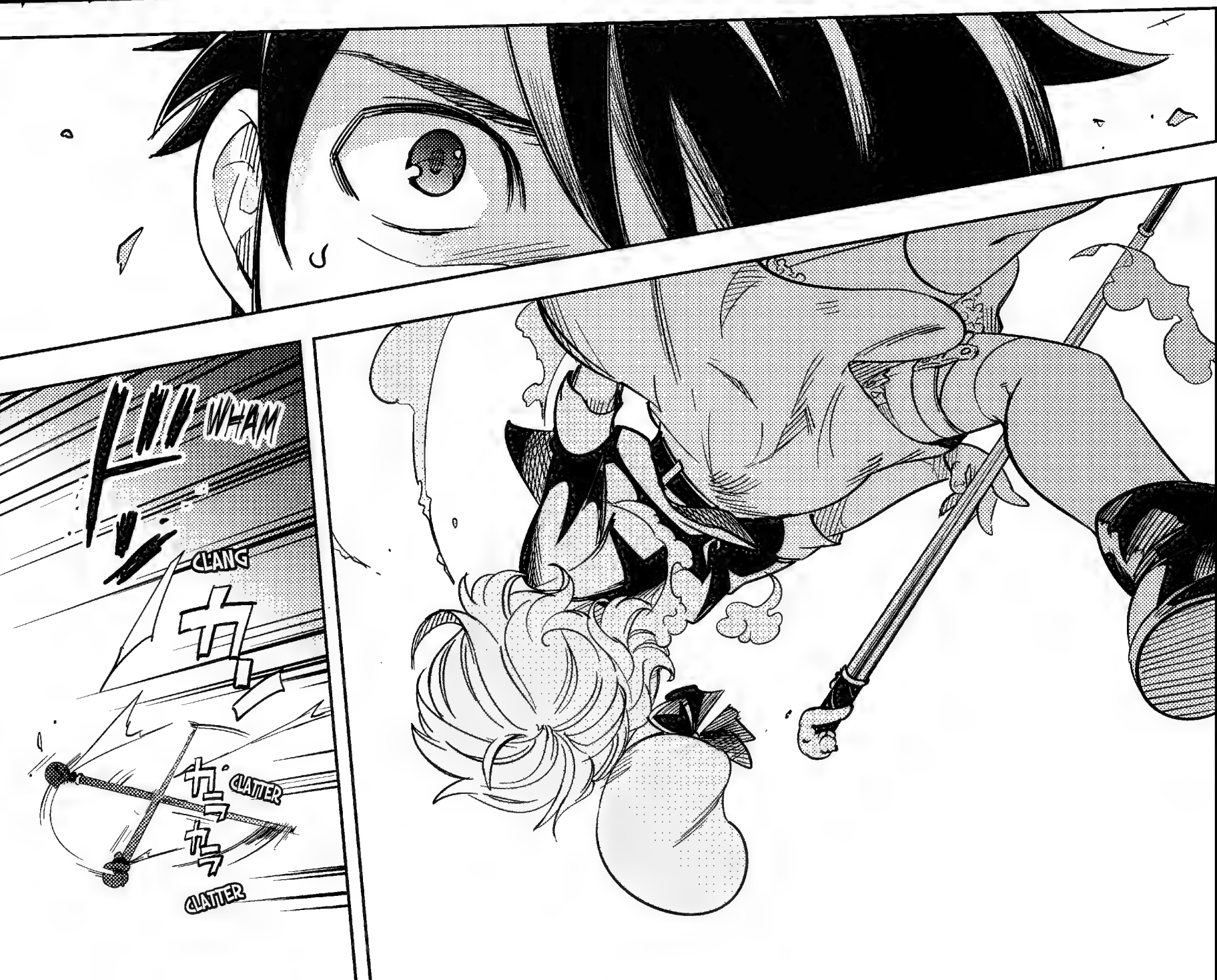


















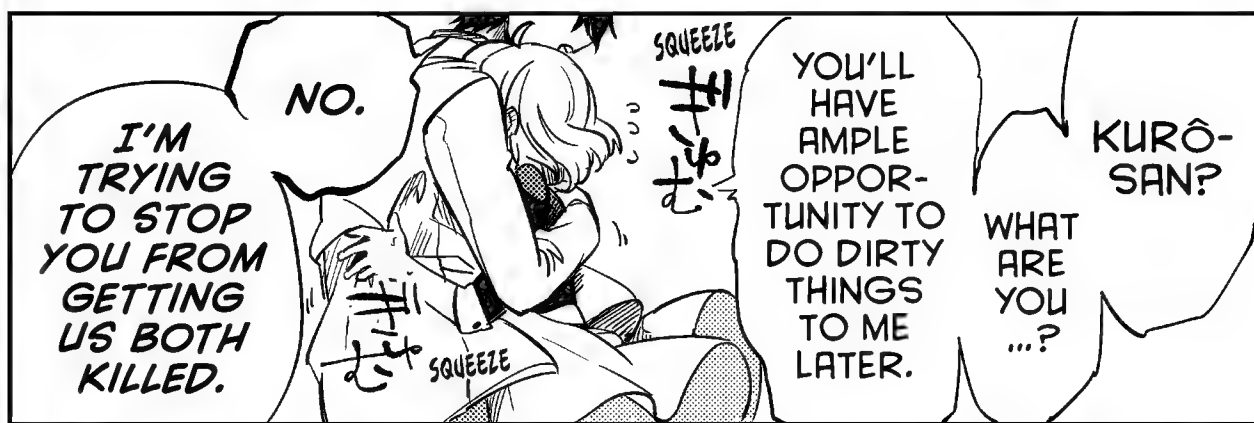


WE'LL  
BEAT A  
TACTICAL  
RE...TREAT  
...?

PLEASE  
PUT ME  
DOWN.



M  
M  
R  
O  
O  
O  
O  
O!



I'M  
TRYING  
TO STOP  
YOU FROM  
GETTING  
US BOTH  
KILLED.

NO.

SQUEEZE

YOU'LL  
HAVE  
AMPLE  
OPPORTU-  
NITY TO  
DO DIRTY  
THINGS  
TO ME  
LATER.

KURÔ-  
SAN?

WHAT  
ARE  
YOU  
...?



KURÔ-  
SAN!

RUN—

THOOM

THOOM







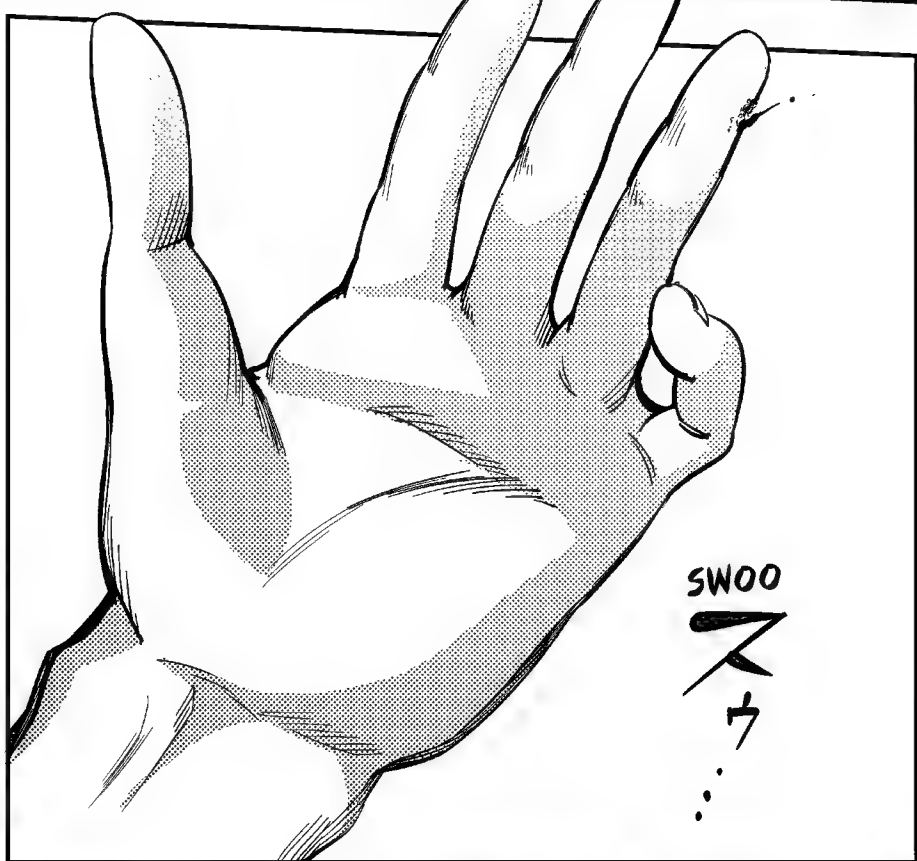


I WAS SURE  
YOU OF  
ALL PEOPLE  
WOULD HAVE  
BEEN ABLE  
TO GUESS.

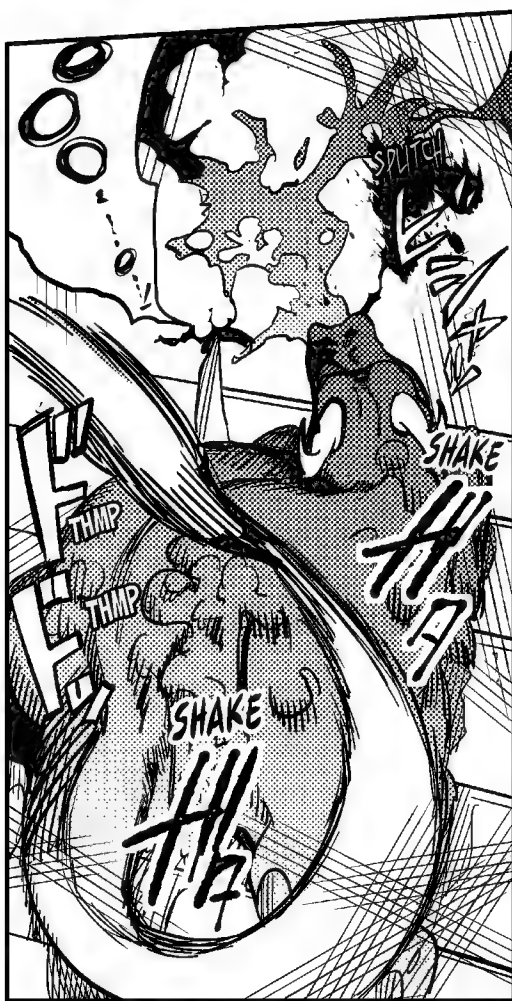
IT'S  
UPSETTING  
TO HEAR THAT  
FROM YOU,  
MISS LEAP-  
BEFORE-YOU-  
LOOK.







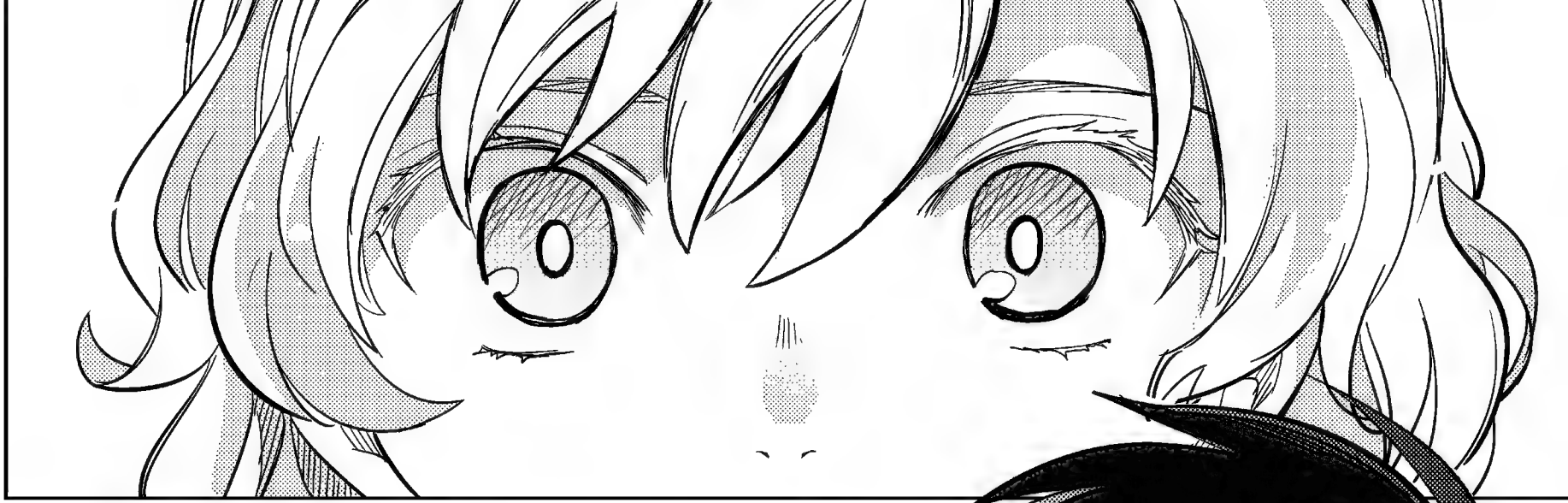












WHEN  
I WAS 11  
YEARS  
OLD,

I GORGED  
MYSELF  
ON TWO  
DIFFERENT  
KINDS  
OF YÔKAI  
MEAT.



IN/SPECTRE







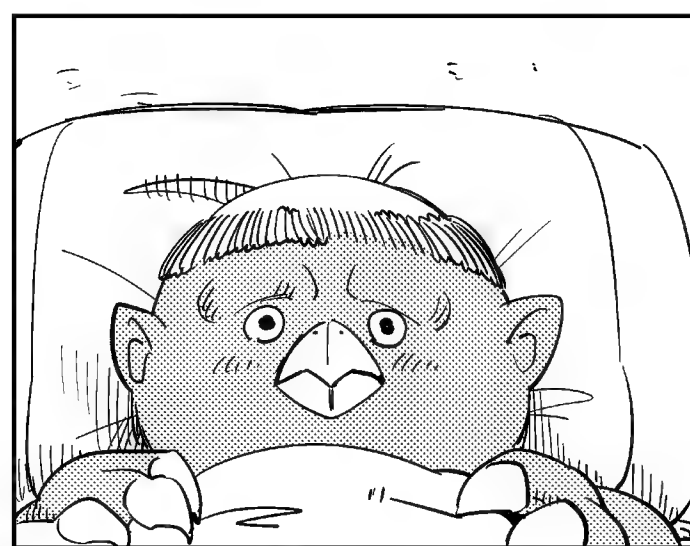
# THE TALE OF A KAPPA COMING ASHORE



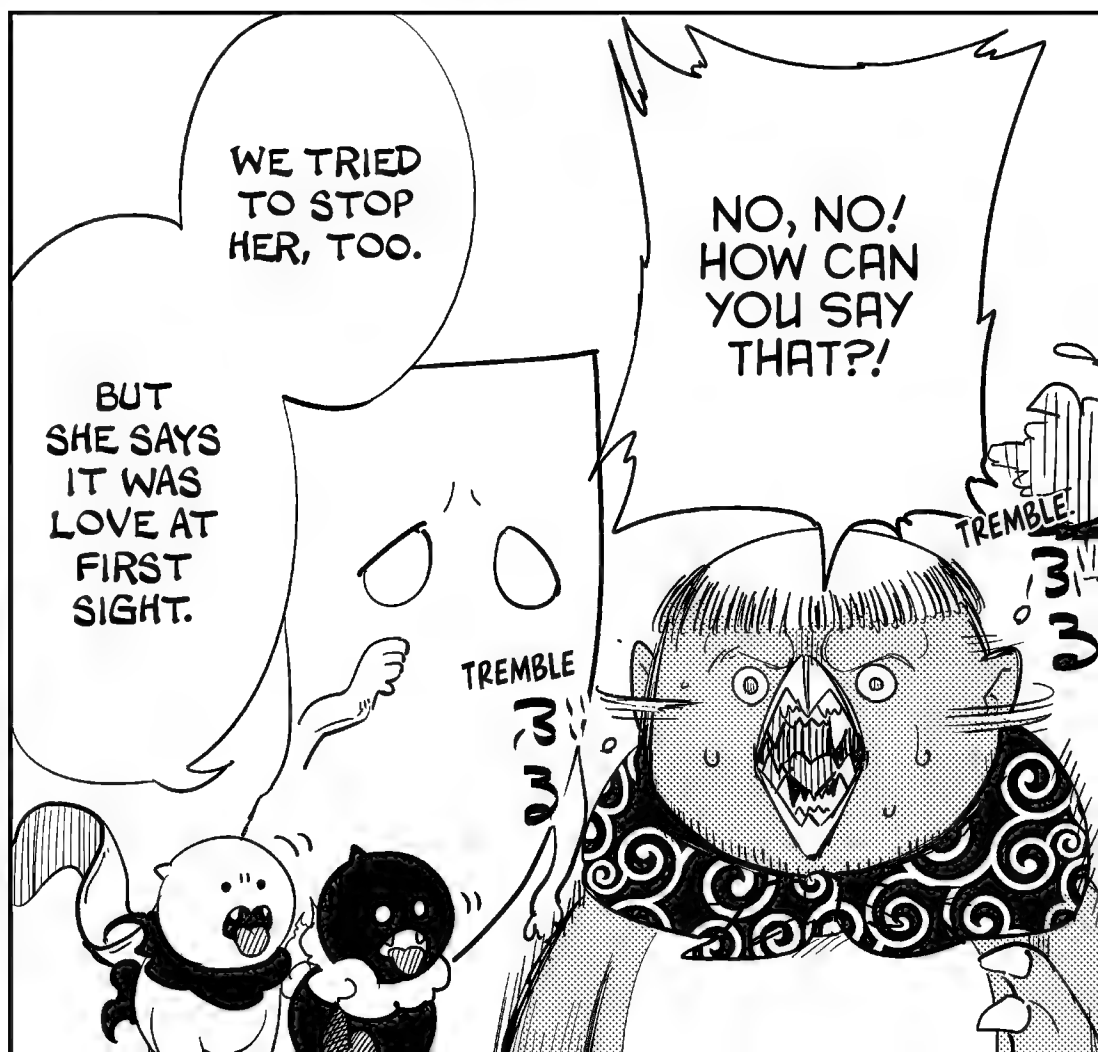
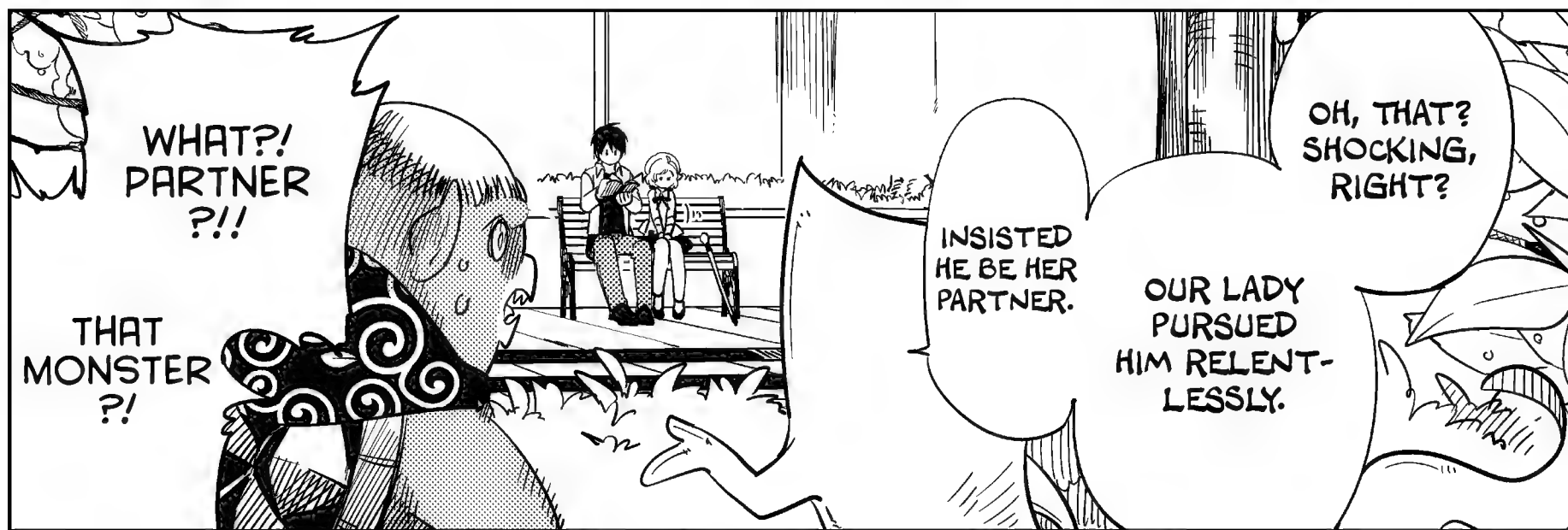
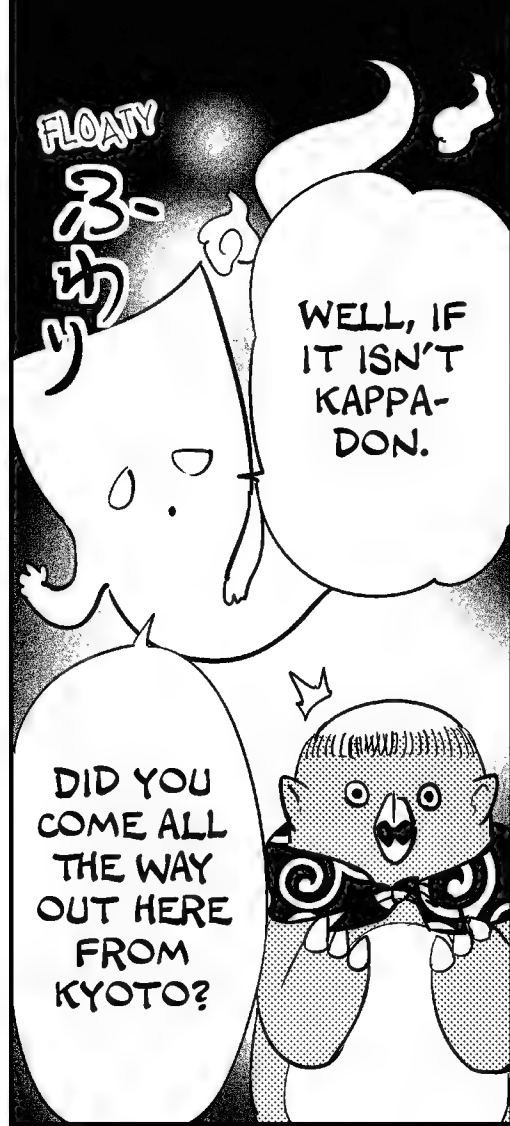
STORY, ART: CHASHIBA KATASE



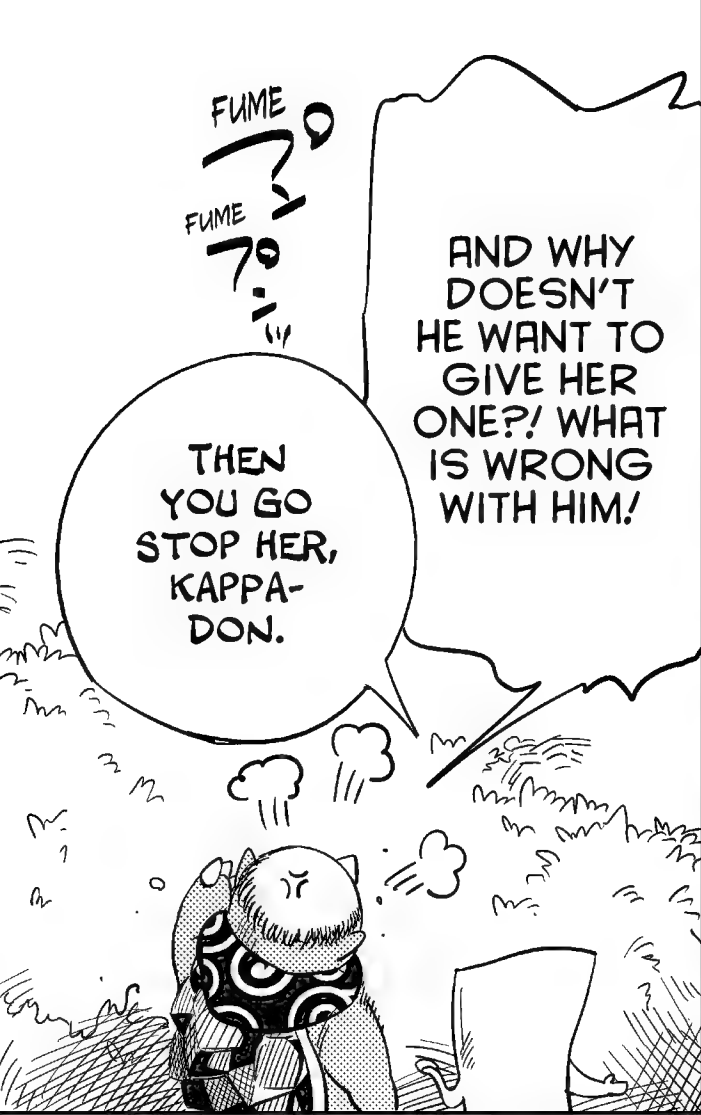












THEN  
YOU GO  
STOP HER,  
KAPPA-  
DON.

AND WHY  
DOESN'T  
HE WANT TO  
GIVE HER  
ONE?! WHAT  
IS WRONG  
WITH HIM!



SHE'S  
PESTERIN'  
HIM FOR  
A KISS!

SHE  
CAN'T!  
SHE  
CAN'T!



TREMBLE

I...

I...

TREMBLE

I  
WON'T  
ALLOW  
IT!!

BAM

KAPPA-  
DON?!



FSHHH

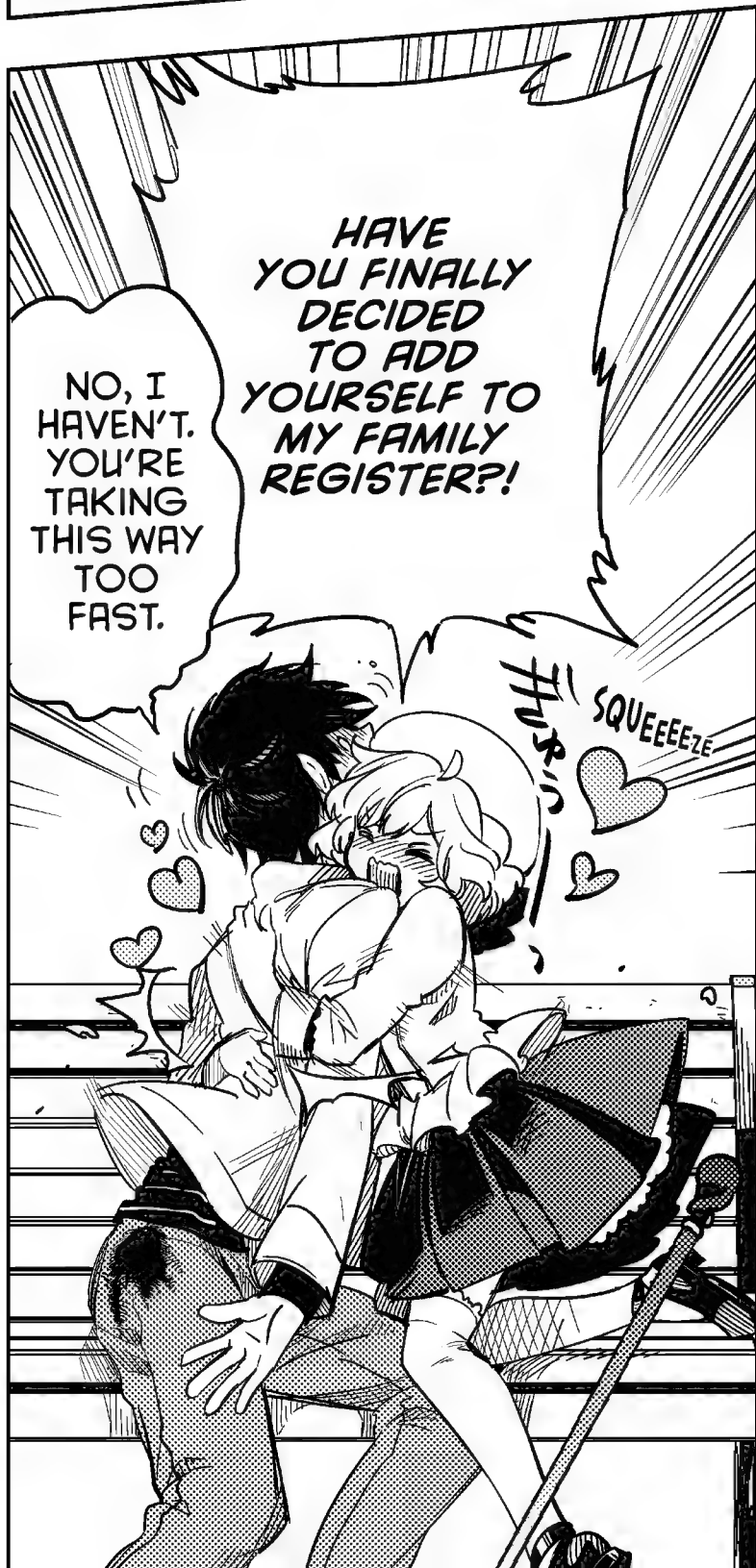
HNGH

BUT THEN  
IT'S ONLY A  
MATTER OF  
TIME BEFORE  
OUR LADY AND  
THAT THING  
END UP  
TOGETHER...

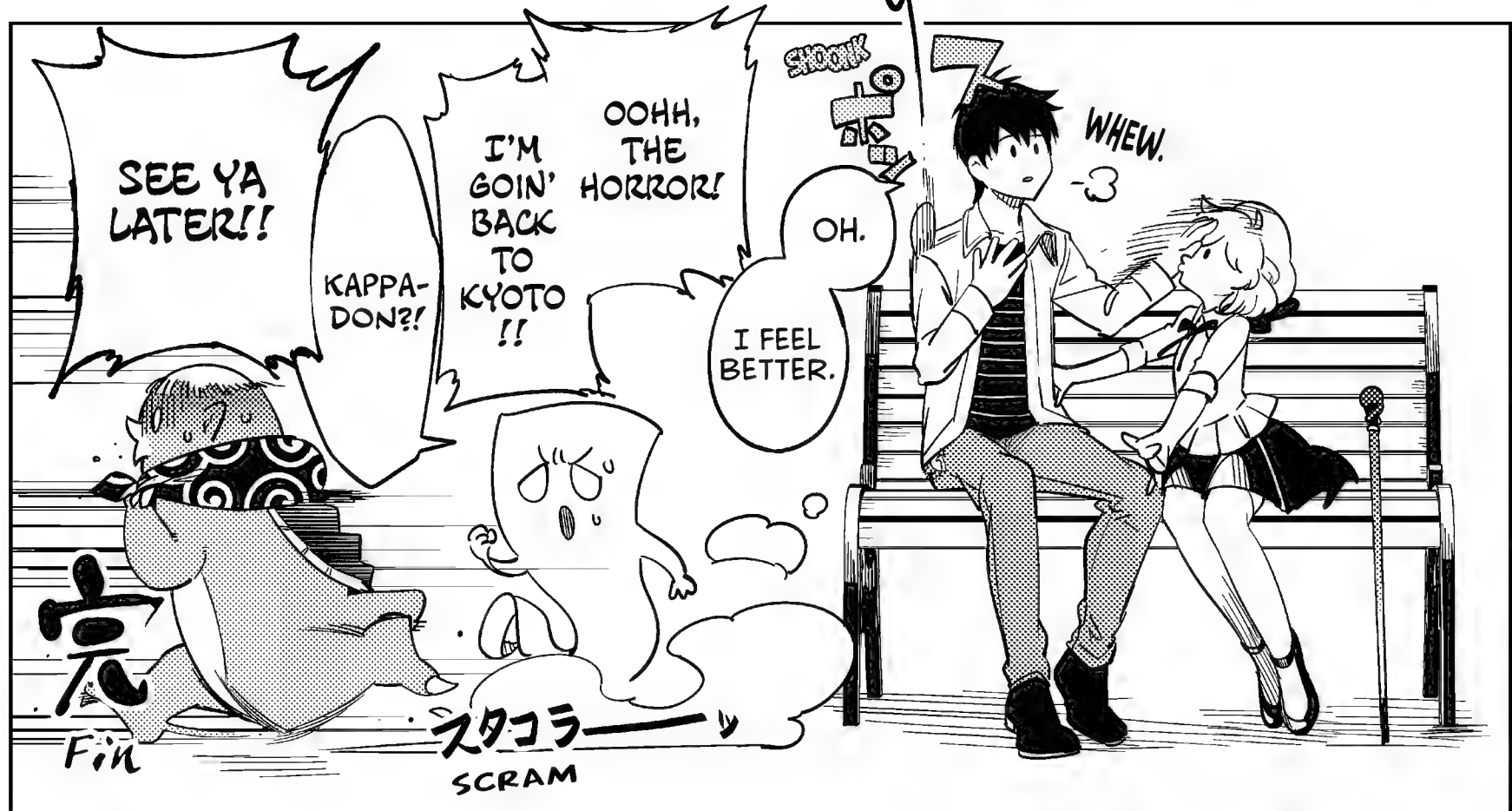
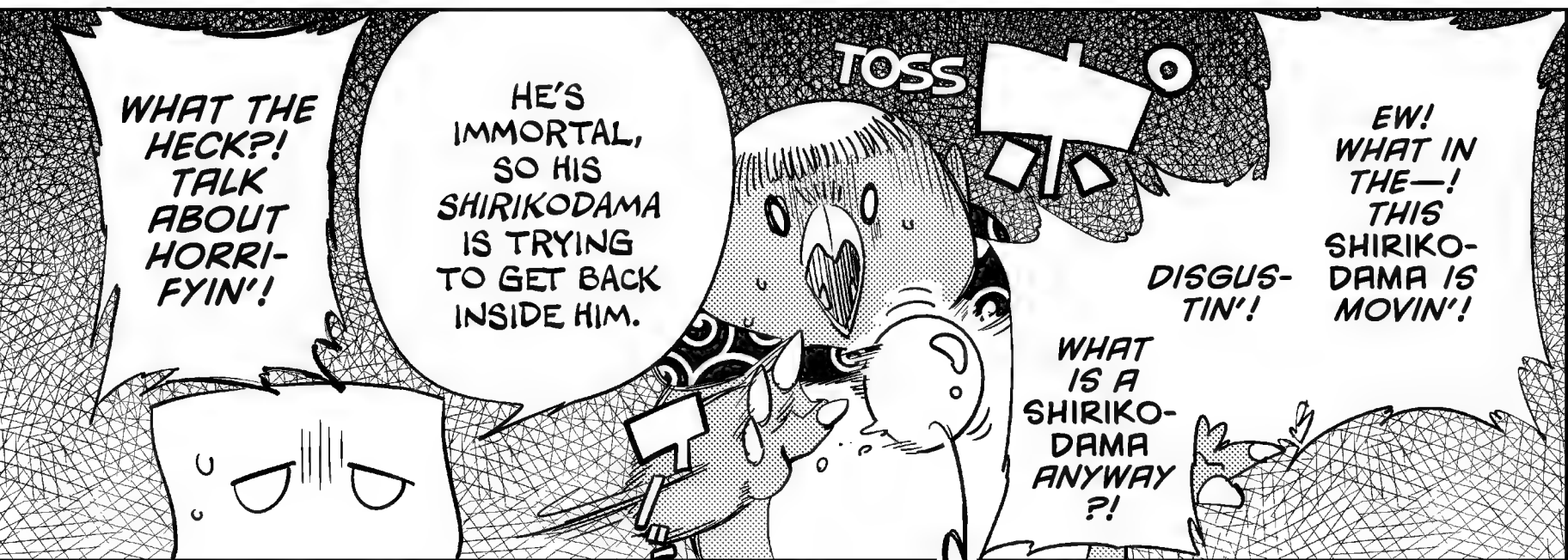


DON'T BE  
STUPID! I  
CAN'T GO  
MANO-A-  
MANO WITH  
THAT  
TERROR!









Thank you very much!  
I hope you'll read volume two. (KATASE)



Staff: Kuro Shima, Tonpu, Yutsu

Editors: O-kawa, T-da (honorifics excluded)



# TRANSLATION NOTES

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more art than science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction in our translation of the work, or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

## Eating grass, page 12

There may be some significance to this observation that Kurô is like an herbivorous goat. In recent years, the Japanese word for "herbivore" has been applied to men who are low on carnal ("carnivorous") desires. In other words, Kurô doesn't actively seek out romantic relationships.

## Oni, page 13

An *oni* is a creature from Japanese folklore. The word is often translated to "ogre", as *oni* do tend to be ugly man-eaters. *Oni* come in many shapes and sizes, but one thing they have in common is horns. Some have only one horn, but the most common depictions of oni have two, much like a goat. The word *oni* is also used to describe people who are tough, unsparing, and/or heartless.



## Engagement ceremony, page 19

When a couple gets engaged in Japan, it is tradition to have a formal dinner during which the parents of the soon-to-be married couple exchange symbolic gifts. These gifts all represent things such as a long-lasting marriage, happiness, good fortune, etc. If Kurô and Saki are planning such a ceremony, it means both of their parents have agreed to the match, and there's little chance that either of them will back out.



## Kotoko Iwanaga means..., page 24

Kotoko isn't necessarily assuming that Kurô would have any interest in what her name means, or that the meaning of her name will impress him in any way. Because the Japanese writing system uses ideographs (one symbol that represents a word or idea), the meaning of her name would tell him which characters to use to write it. She's basically telling him how to write or "spell" her name, in case he ever decides to look her up.

## First temple visit, and the New Year's Bell, page 32

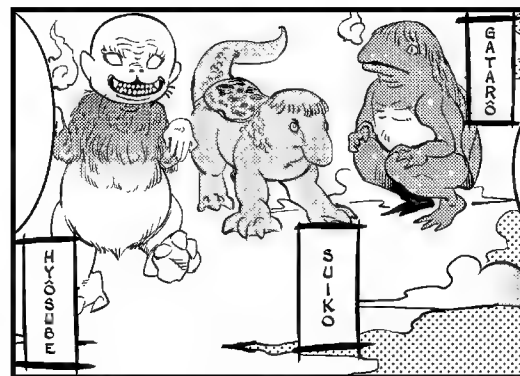
In Japan, it's a New Year's tradition to visit a shrine or temple within the first three days of the new year, to express gratitude for the previous year and pray for a good new year. The New Year's Bell is rung 108 times, around midnight on New Year's Eve. One theory as to why this is, is that the number 108 represents the types of worldly desires that exist in the world, and hearing the bell ring can purify your heart of those worldly desires that had built up over the last year. However, the number of rings can vary from temple to temple, sometimes ringing more than 200 times.





### **Gatarô, suiko, and hyôsube, page 33**

As the reader may have guessed from the context, these are all supernatural water creatures, like the more well-known kappa. All of them live by rivers and interact with humans with varying degrees of hostility. As an expert in regard to all Japanese supernatural creatures, Kotoko wants to make sure she has all the details right.



### **Sushi and shrimp crackers, page 34**

Kotoko is referring to the fact that there is a popular chain of sushi restaurants called Kappa-Zushi, and a brand of shrimp flavored crackers which also bears the name of the aquatic creatures.



### **Kannon, page 53**

Kannon, or Guanyin, is a bodhisattva—one who has attained Nirvana but has come back to earth to help show others the way. She is also considered a goddess of mercy, including leading souls of the deceased toward the pure land. In other words, Kotoko is going to enlist her help to send this ghost to nirvana.

### **The Warrior's Way to My Heart, page 53**

The translators confess that this is not a direct translation of this particular novel title, but such is the way of translating book and movie titles. The Japanese title of the book is *Mushaburui LOVE*, where *mushaburui* means "trembling with excitement or anticipation," but this particular ghost would be attracted to the *musha* part, which means "warrior." The translators chose to focus on that as the main point of the English title.

### **Good things come to those who sleep, page 59**

Here, Kotoko is accurately reciting the Japanese version of "good things come to those who wait", which translates more literally to, "If you want good fortune, go to sleep and wait for it." Unfortunately, the English version doesn't include the part about sleep, so the translators had to tweak it a little.

### **Tea lunch, page 64**

More accurately, Kotoko states that she has eaten a *kaiseki* meal. *Kaiseki* is a very high-class Japanese cuisine, and usually consists of miso soup and three side dishes. When written with the Chinese characters that Kotoko used, it refers to a meal served in conjunction with a formal tea ceremony. In keeping with the high level of the meal, Kyoto heirloom vegetables, or *kyô yasai*, are expensive vegetables served mainly in upscale restaurants, and they are very nutritious.

### **Baké-Danuki, page 66**

A tanuki is a Japanese raccoon dog. While tanuki are normal, everyday animals, a *baké-danuki* (or "transforming tanuki") is supernatural one capable of shapeshifting.



### **Protective barrier, page 66**

The word our tanuki friend uses here for "protective barrier" is *kekkaï*, literally "bound world." Often translated to "barrier," a *kekkaï* is a boundary marking off the border between the sacred and the profane. The area inside the barrier is supposed to be protected from harm.





## Yao Bikuni, page 92

Although Kotoko relates the significant parts of the tale, the reader may be interested in a slightly more detailed account of Yao Bikuni. There are regional differences to the story, but the gist of it is that a man was invited to dinner at a fisherman's house and discovered by chance that the fisherman was serving mermaid meat. Repulsed at the idea, he didn't eat the meat but wrapped it up and took it home to discard later. Either his daughter or his wife then ate the meat before he could warn her not to, and lived for centuries thereafter. After being widowed several times

and losing all her friends, she became a nun and traveled the country, helping the poor.

## Police boxes, page 119

Police boxes, loosely translated from *kôban*, are like miniature police stations, spread throughout the community, bringing the police close to the community so they can respond more readily to the citizens' needs.

## Pleasure crime, page 122

A "pleasure crime," or *yukaihan*, is committed by someone who does it just to get a rise out of people, or for the fun of it.

## Should I take her in, page 142

Specifically, Saki wonders if she should *hodô* Kotoko. The purpose of *hodô*, which means "guidance," is to identify minors who are committing—or look like they might commit—a crime, and to provide guidance to prevent them from resorting to such behavior. Kotoko is suspicious because she is out late at night, when most good children would be at home.



## The Kamo River Kappa, page 166



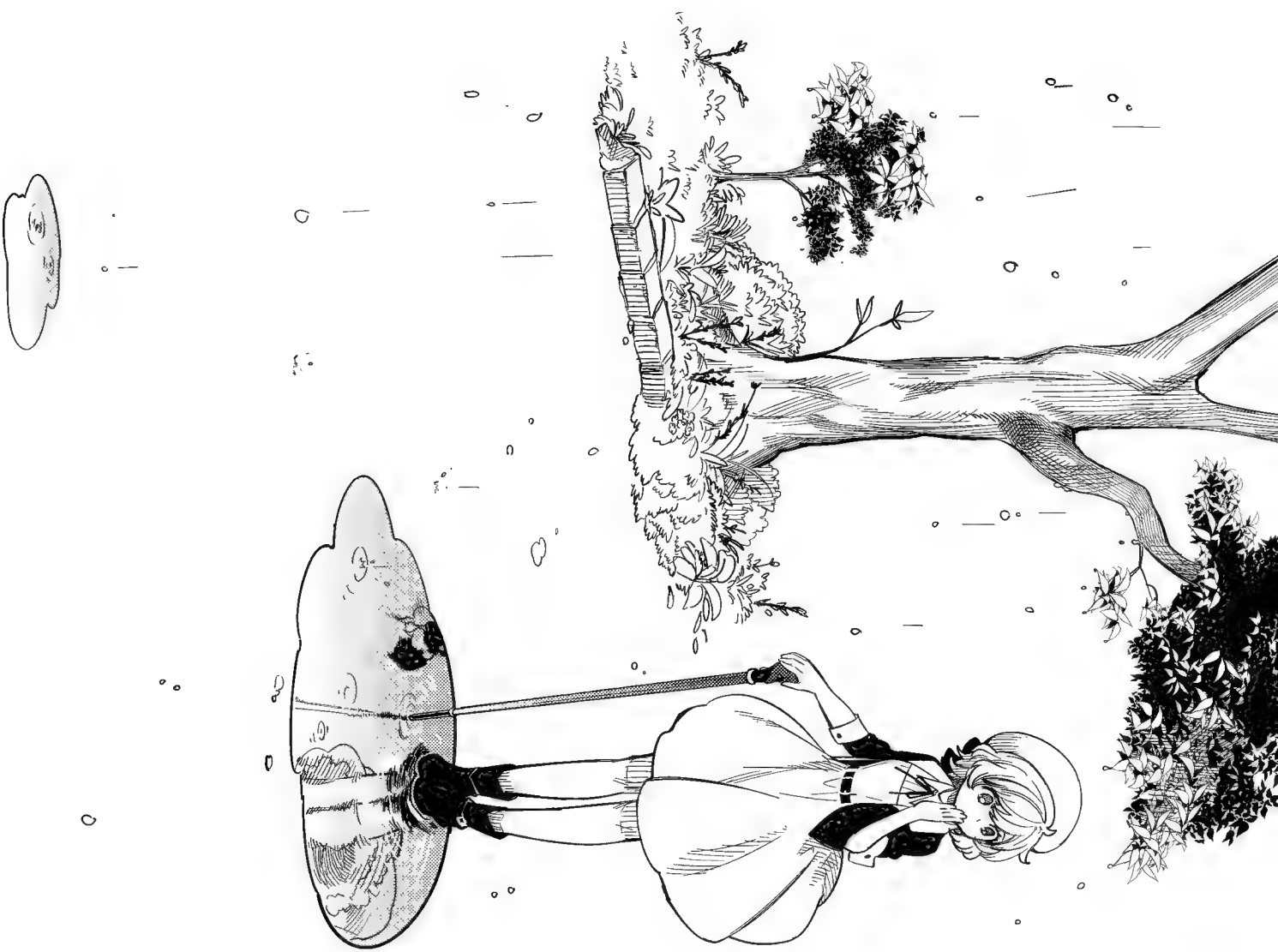
This kappa is a native of Kyoto, and although he used the standard Japanese dialect in the main story, here in the bonus manga, he speaks with a Kyoto dialect. The dialects from this region of Japan are often translated into an American Southern dialect. This is because people from this region are seen by the Japanese in a similar way as people from the

American South are seen by residents of the United States—some are simple and humorous, while others are refined and proud.

## Shirikodama, page 170

Translated roughly as "rear-end jewel," a *shirikodama* is a mythical crystal believed to exist in humans' anuses. According to legend, the reason kappa attack people is to obtain this jewel.







## **In/Spectre 1**

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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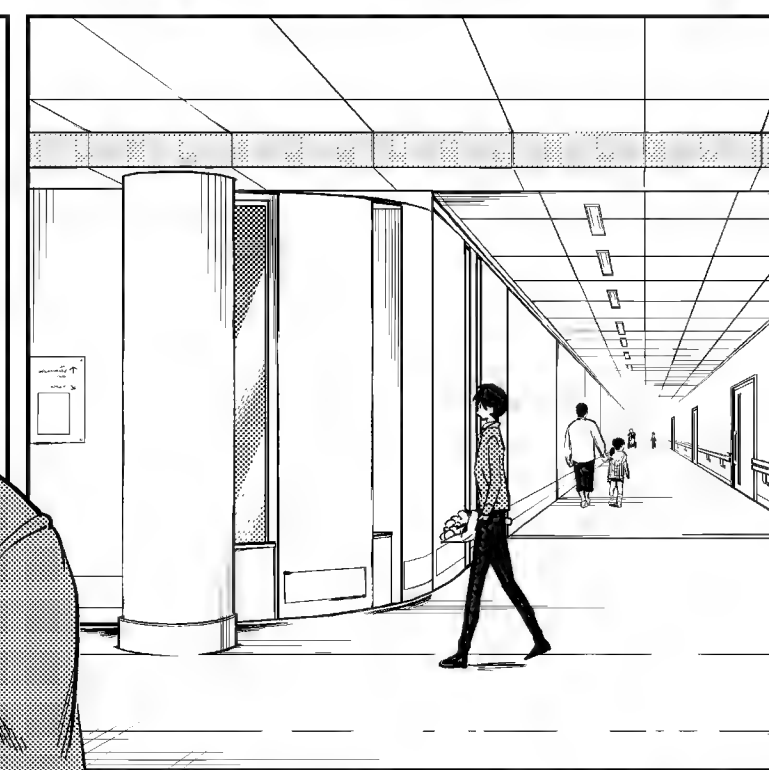
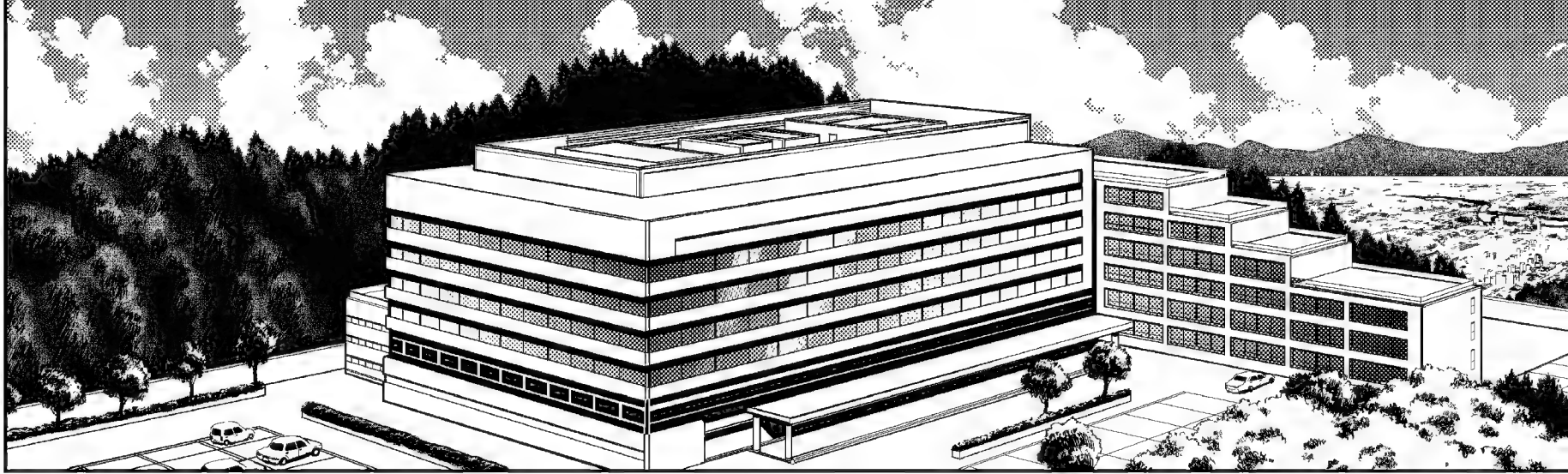




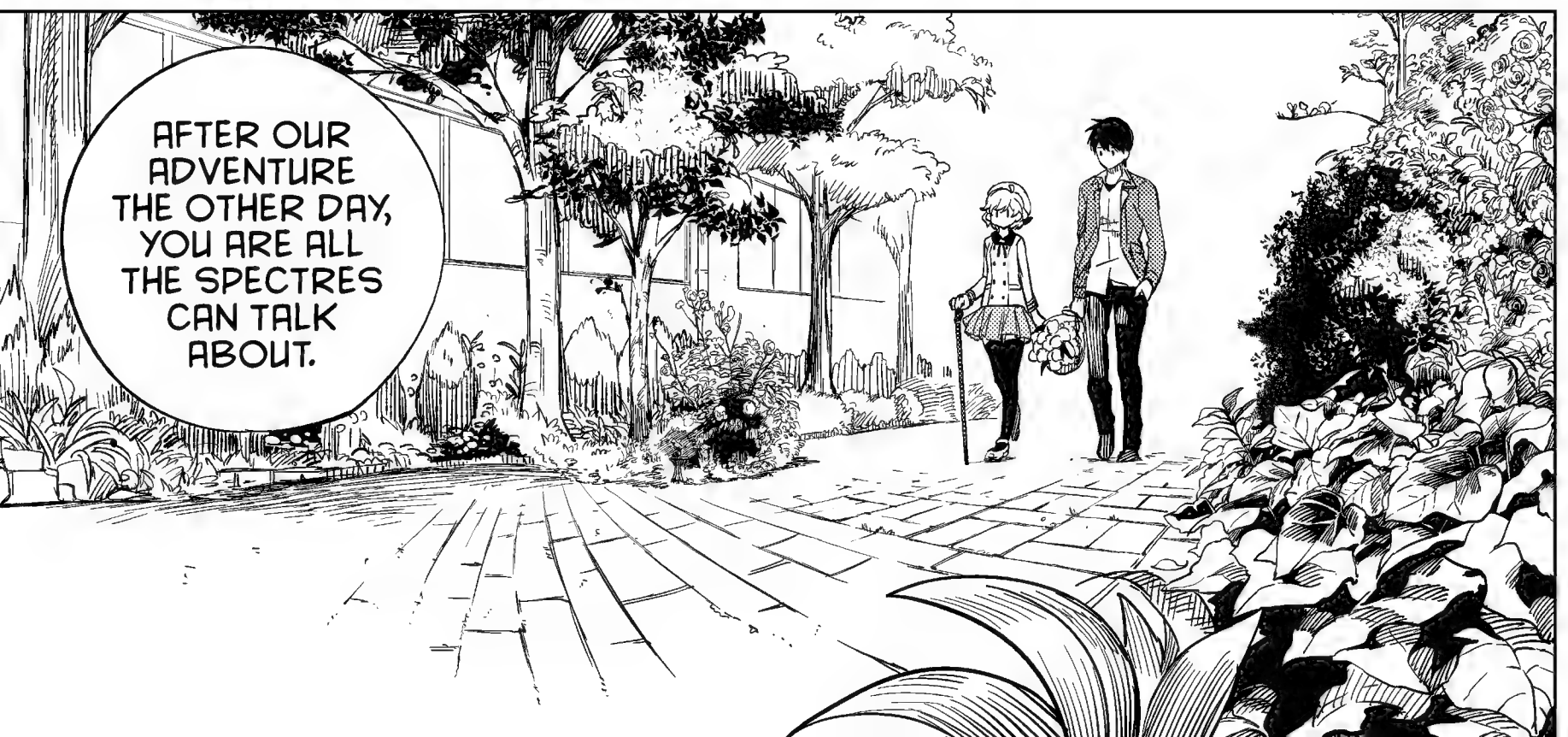
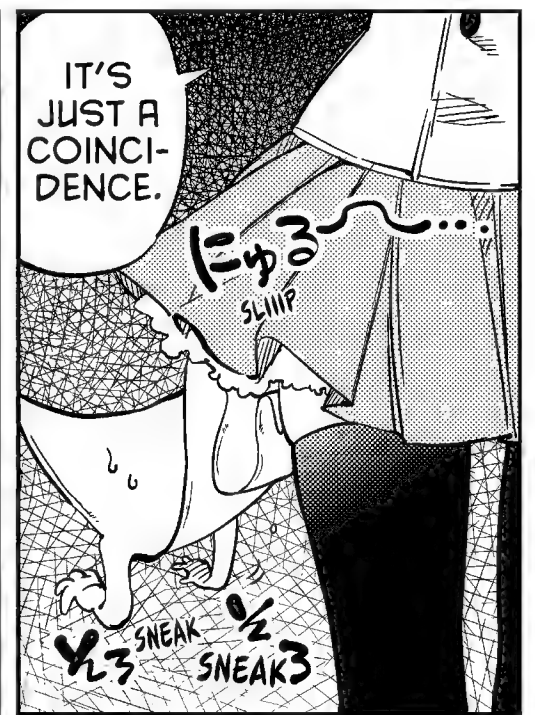


CHAPTER 2:  
"RUMORS OF THE STEEL LADY"

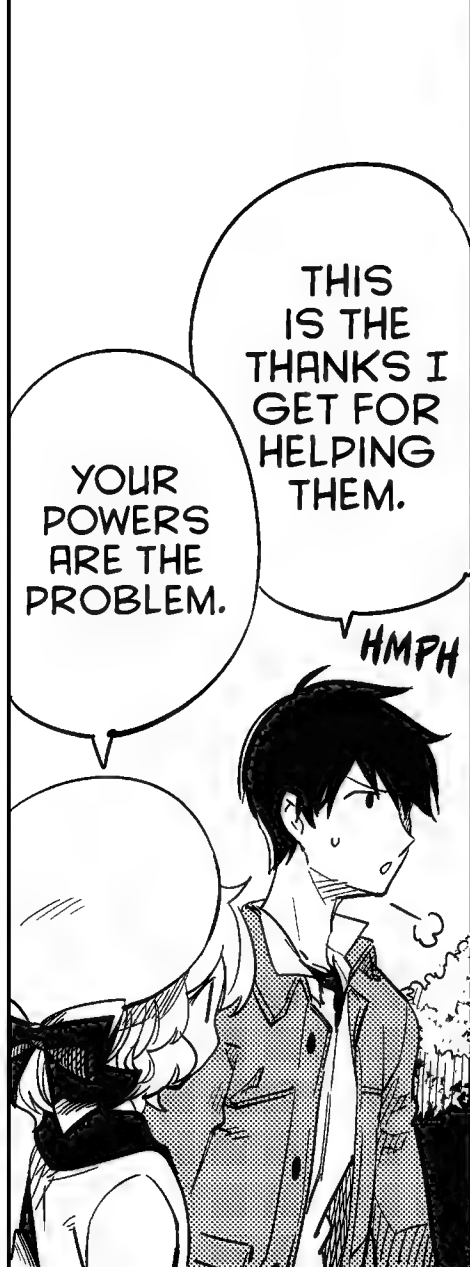








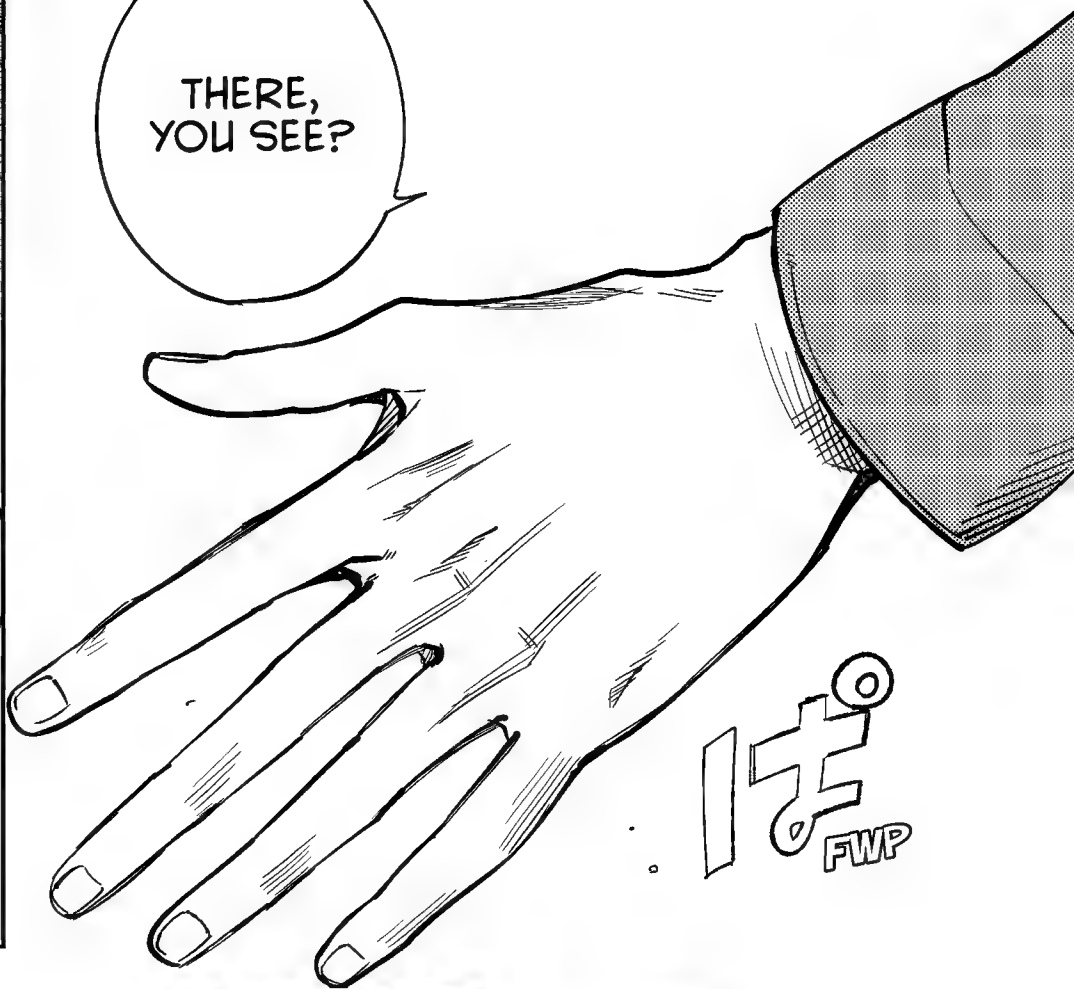








THERE,  
YOU SEE?



WHAT  
ARE YOU  
LOOKING  
AT?

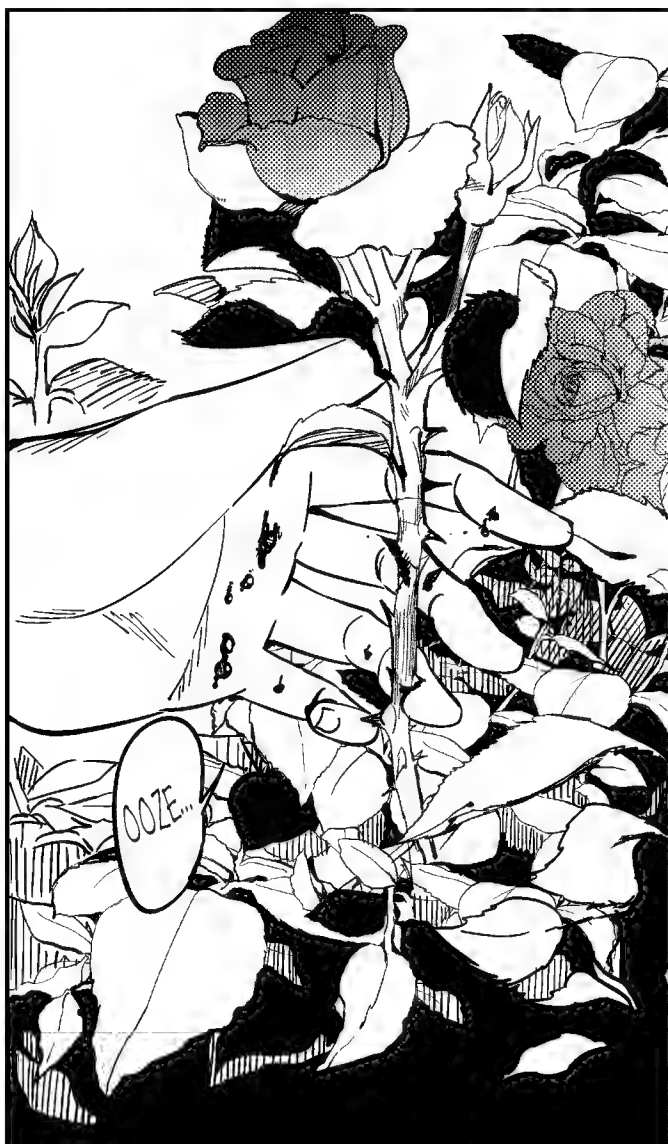
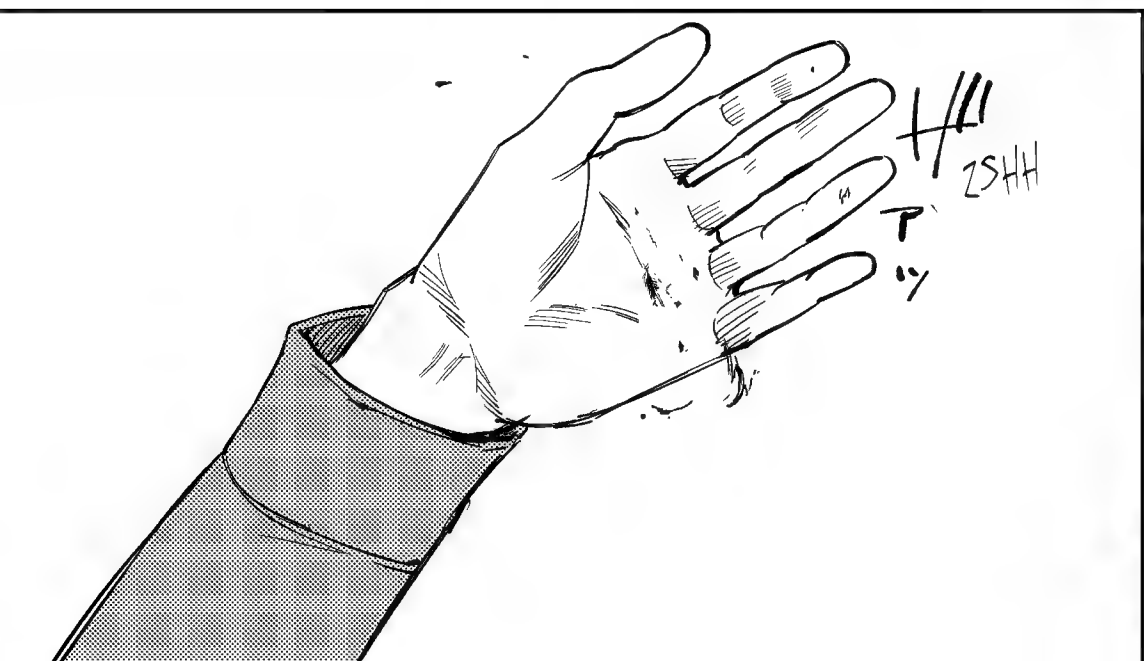
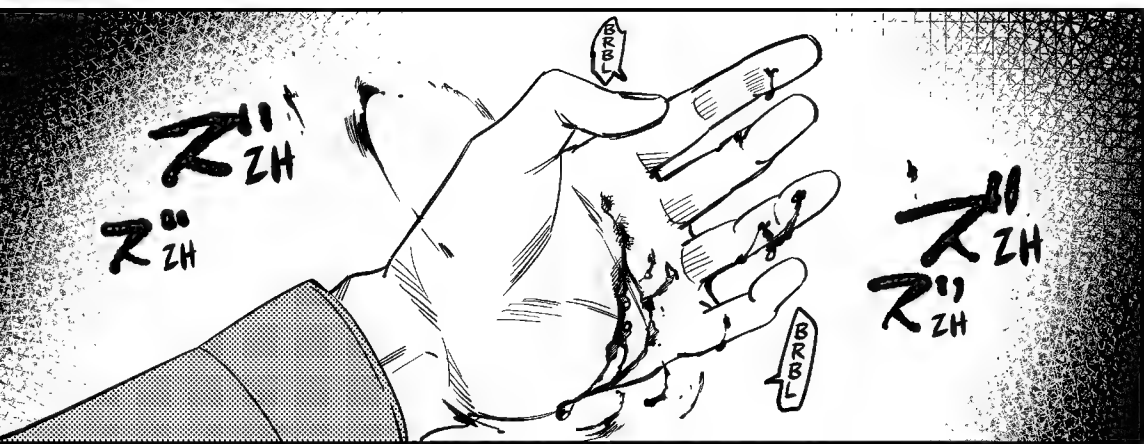
NOT TOO  
MUCH MEAT.  
A LITTLE  
BONY.  
HIGH MARKS  
FOR THAT.

A NICE,  
SHAPELY  
HAND WITH  
LONG  
FINGERS.



SINCE  
THEN,  
ALL MY  
INJURIES  
HEAL  
INSTANTLY.

I ATE  
MERMAID  
MEAT WHEN  
I WAS 11.





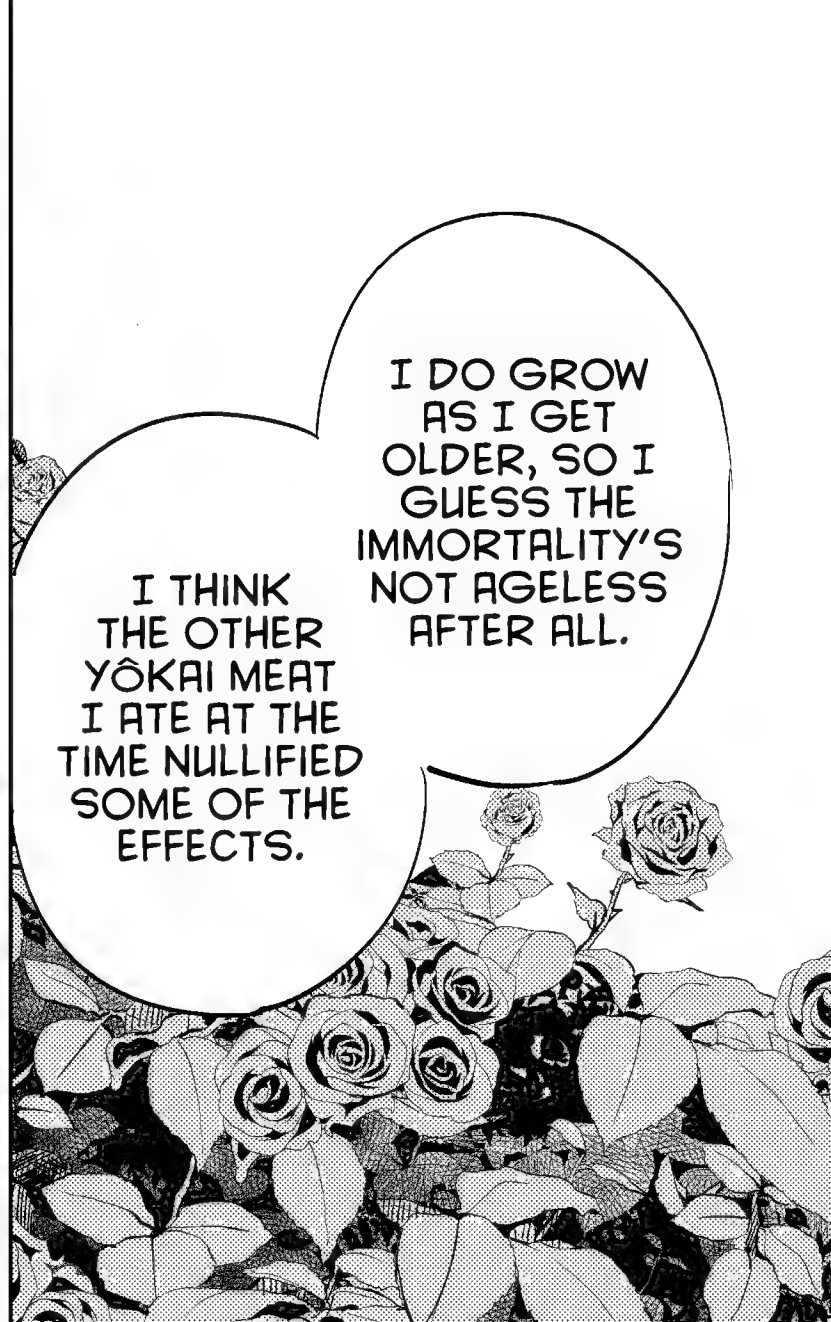






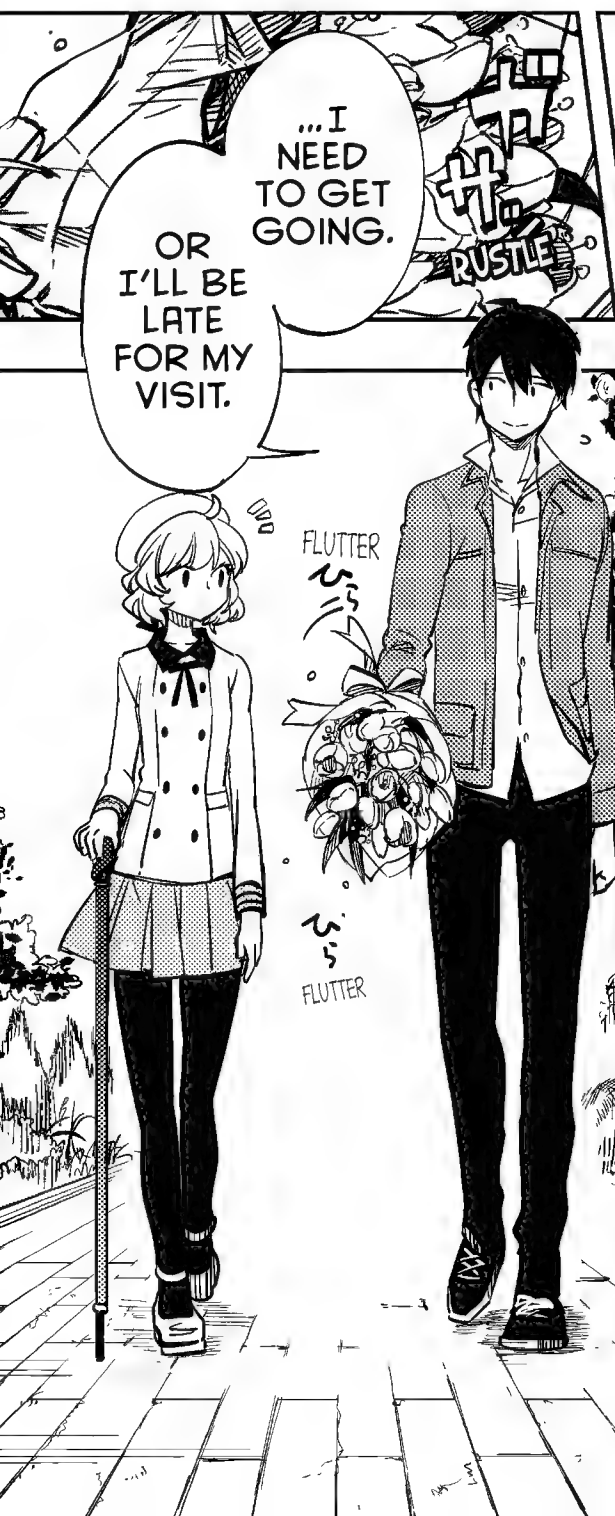
BUT...

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT I WILL STOP AGING AFTER A CERTAIN POINT.



I DO GROW AS I GET OLDER, SO I GUESS THE IMMORTALITY'S NOT AGELESS AFTER ALL.

I THINK THE OTHER YÔKAI MEAT I ATE AT THE TIME NULLIFIED SOME OF THE EFFECTS.



...I NEED TO GET GOING.

OR I'LL BE LATE FOR MY VISIT.

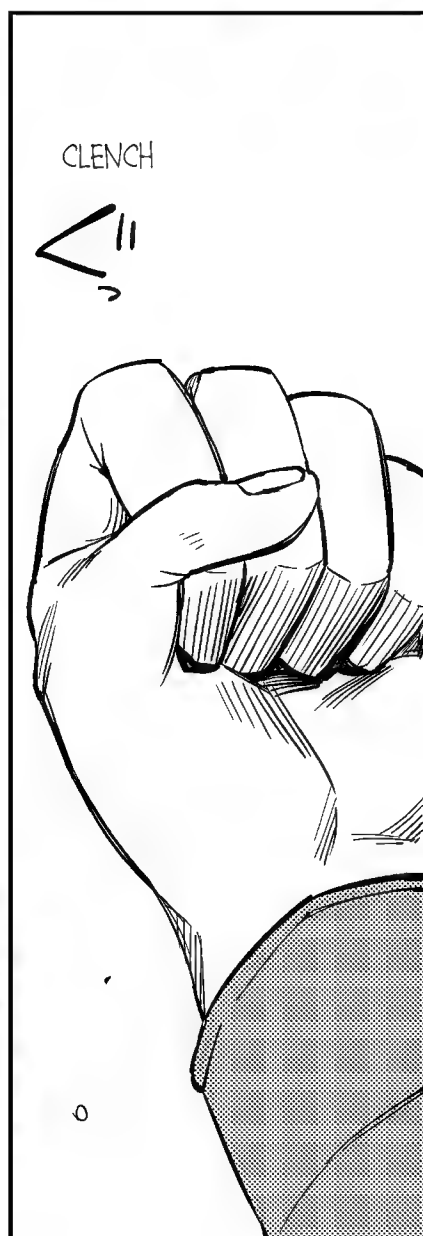
FLUTTER

FLUTTER



...YOU SAID YOU ATE TWO TYPES OF YÔKAI.

WHAT WAS THE OTHER ONE?



CLENCH





YOU CAN  
STILL SAY  
THAT AFTER  
EVERYTHING  
I'VE TOLD  
YOU?

VERY WELL.  
I SUSPECT  
WE'LL BE  
SEEING EACH  
OTHER  
FREQUENTLY  
FOR A LONG  
TIME TO  
COME.

I'M  
SURE I'LL  
HAVE AMPLE  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO ASK YOU  
ABOUT  
YOURSELF.



IT'S UNDER-  
STANDABLE.  
OUTWARDLY,  
YOU ARE THE  
VERY PICTURE  
OF NAÏVETÉ.

IT MUST  
HAVE BEEN AN  
UNFORTUNATE  
INCIDENT FOR  
SAKI-SAN  
AS WELL.

"I DIDN'T  
KNOW THAT  
YOU WERE  
THAT KIND  
OF MAN,"

SHE  
SAID.



I DO  
FIND IT  
SOMEWHAT  
UNSET-  
TLING.

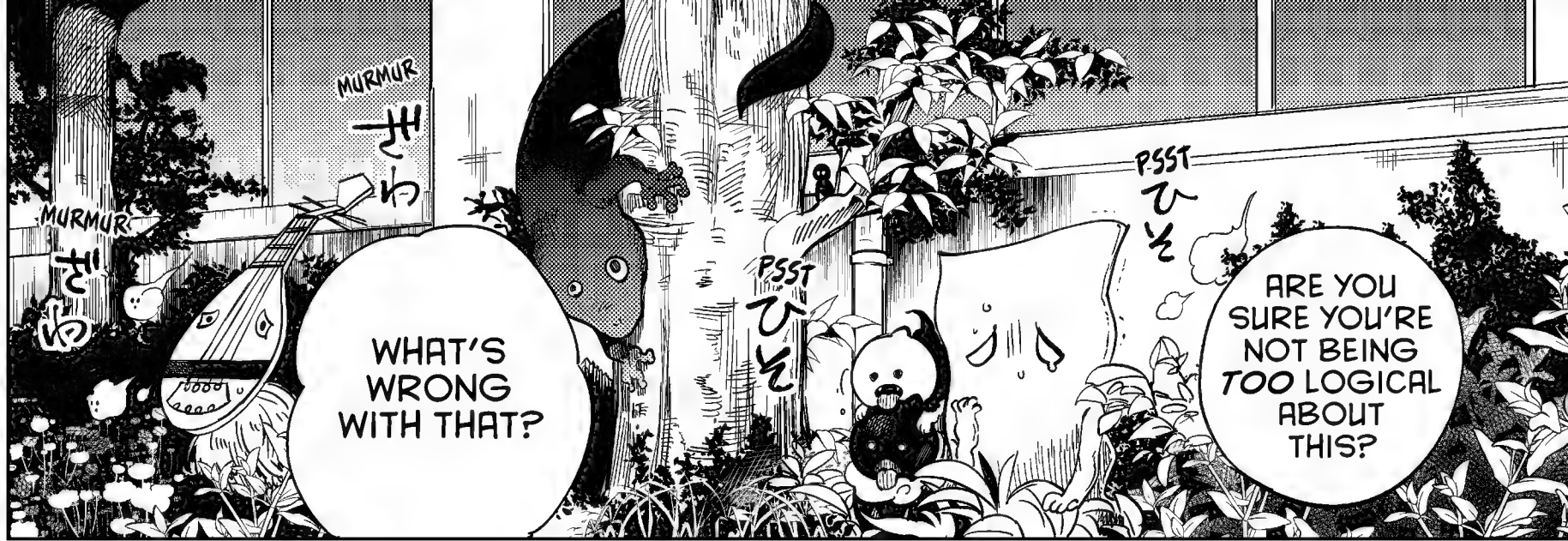
AND I'M  
SURE IT'S  
WHY YOUR  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH SAKI-  
SAN ENDED  
IN RUIN.

RUSTLE



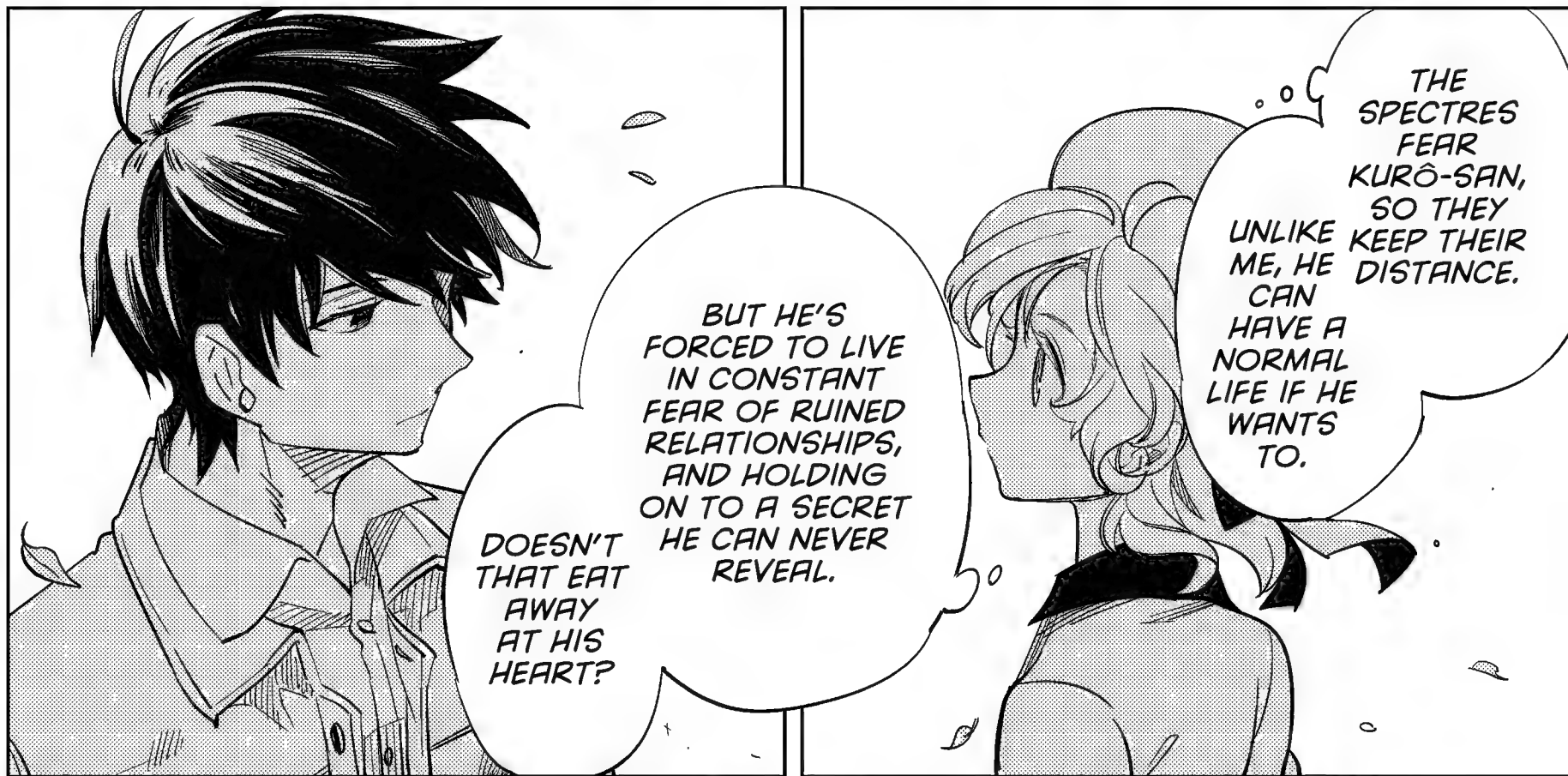






WHAT'S  
WRONG  
WITH THAT?

ARE YOU  
SURE YOU'RE  
NOT BEING  
TOO LOGICAL  
ABOUT  
THIS?



DOESN'T  
THAT EAT  
AWAY  
AT HIS  
HEART?

BUT HE'S  
FORCED TO LIVE  
IN CONSTANT  
FEAR OF RUINED  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
AND HOLDING  
ON TO A SECRET  
HE CAN NEVER  
REVEAL.

THE  
SPECTRES  
FEAR  
KURÔ-SAN,  
SO THEY  
KEEP THEIR  
DISTANCE.  
UNLIKE  
ME, HE  
CAN  
HAVE A  
NORMAL  
LIFE IF HE  
WANTS  
TO.



THAT'S  
NOT THE  
ONLY  
PROBLEM,  
AND YOU  
KNOW IT.



IF WE  
COULD JUST  
IGNORE THE  
FACT THAT MY  
APPEARANCE  
DOESN'T MATCH  
WHAT APPEALS TO  
YOU, THIS WOULD  
ALL BE SOLVED  
HANDILY.





AND WITH YOU BY MY SIDE, THERE WON'T BE ANY MAJOR UPSETS.

MOST OF THEIR PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED THROUGH CONSULTATION.

YOU NEVER SAID YŌKAI EXTERMINATION WAS A REQUIREMENT FOR THIS RELATIONSHIP.



IT WAS RATHER UNFORTUNATE FOR THAT COW THAT IT COULDN'T SEE YOU.

SOME-  
TIMES  
THINGS  
DON'T  
WORK  
OUT.

WHAT HAPPENED THE OTHER DAY WASN'T A MAJOR UPSET?



BUT IT'S VERY RARE FOR A SPECTRE TO SEE YOU—PART HUMAN, PART YŌKAI—

AND NOT BE FILLED WITH DREAD.





IT WOULD  
BE QUITE  
THE MONSTER  
WHO DOESN'T  
FIND YOU  
FRIGHTENING.



APPROXIMATELY  
TWO AND  
A HALF  
YEARS  
LATER.

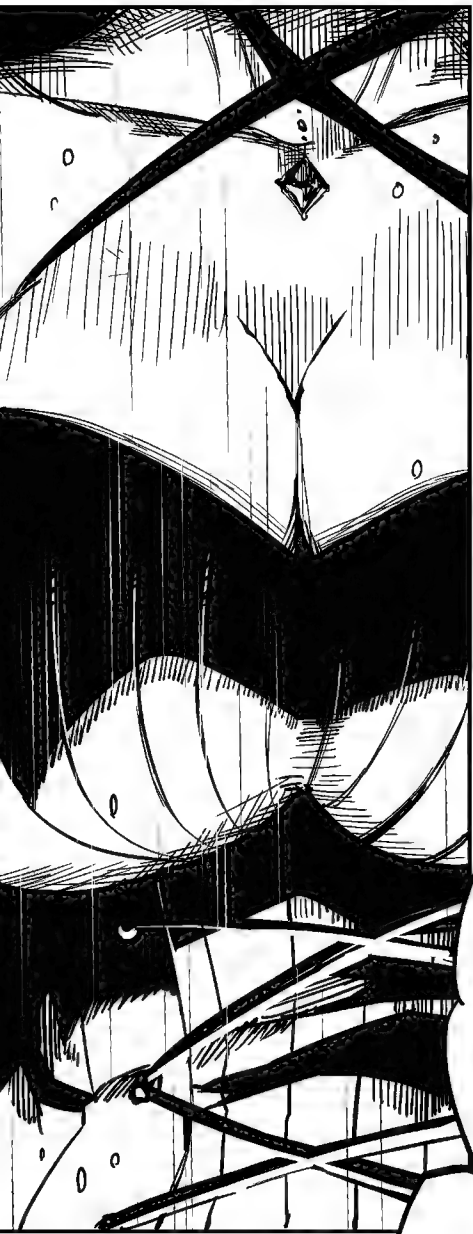




AND  
...!



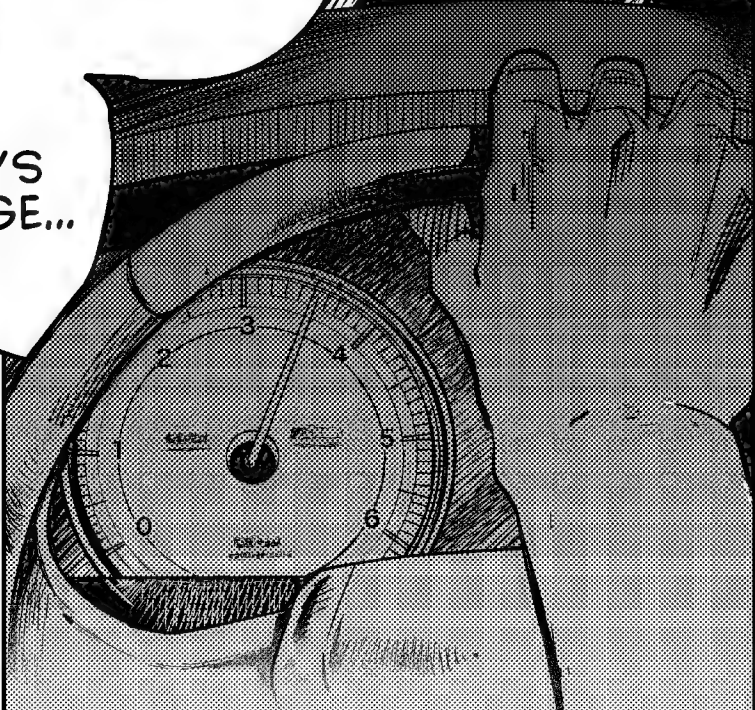
A CERTAIN  
INCIDENT  
HAPPENED  
IN THE  
DISTANT  
CITY OF  
MAKURA-  
ZAKA.



WHAT KIND  
OF TALENT?!  
I'M TALKING  
ABOUT HER  
RACK!



IT'S  
HUGE...



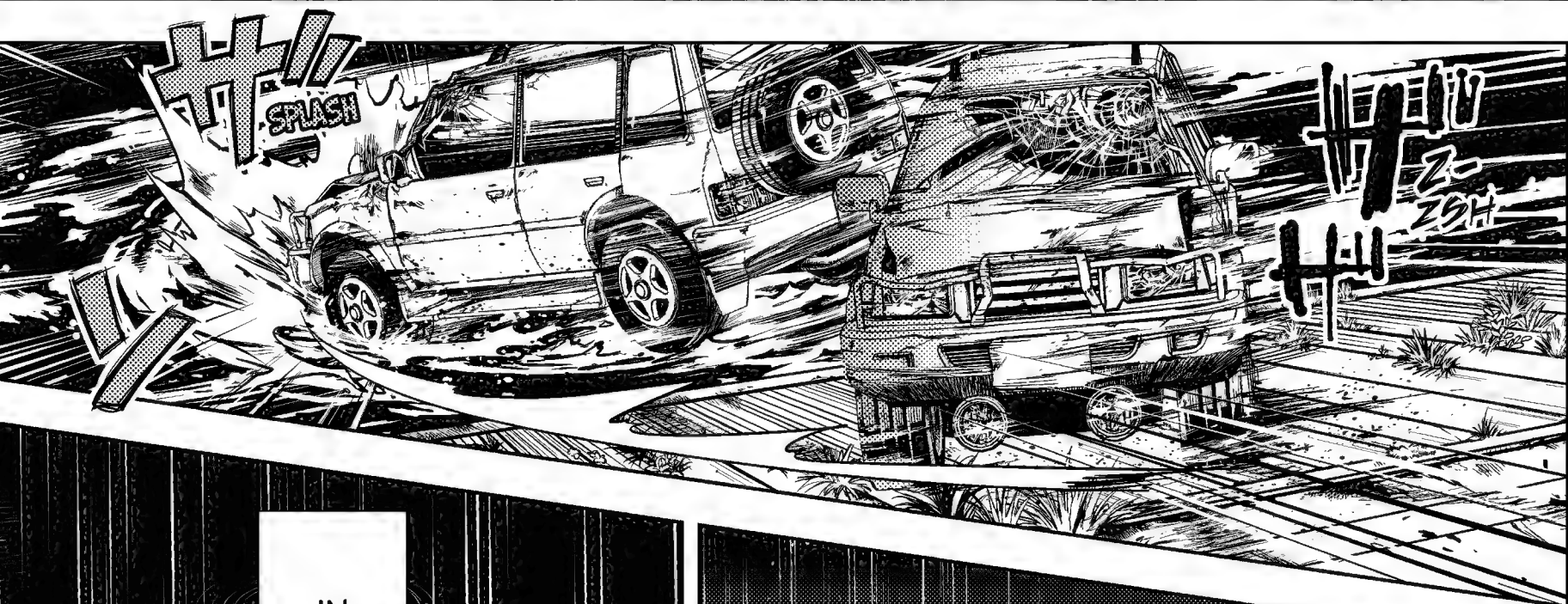
THIS  
NEW PART-  
TIMER—  
SHE IS  
SMOKING  
HOT!

AND SHE  
HAS REAL  
"TALENT"  
!









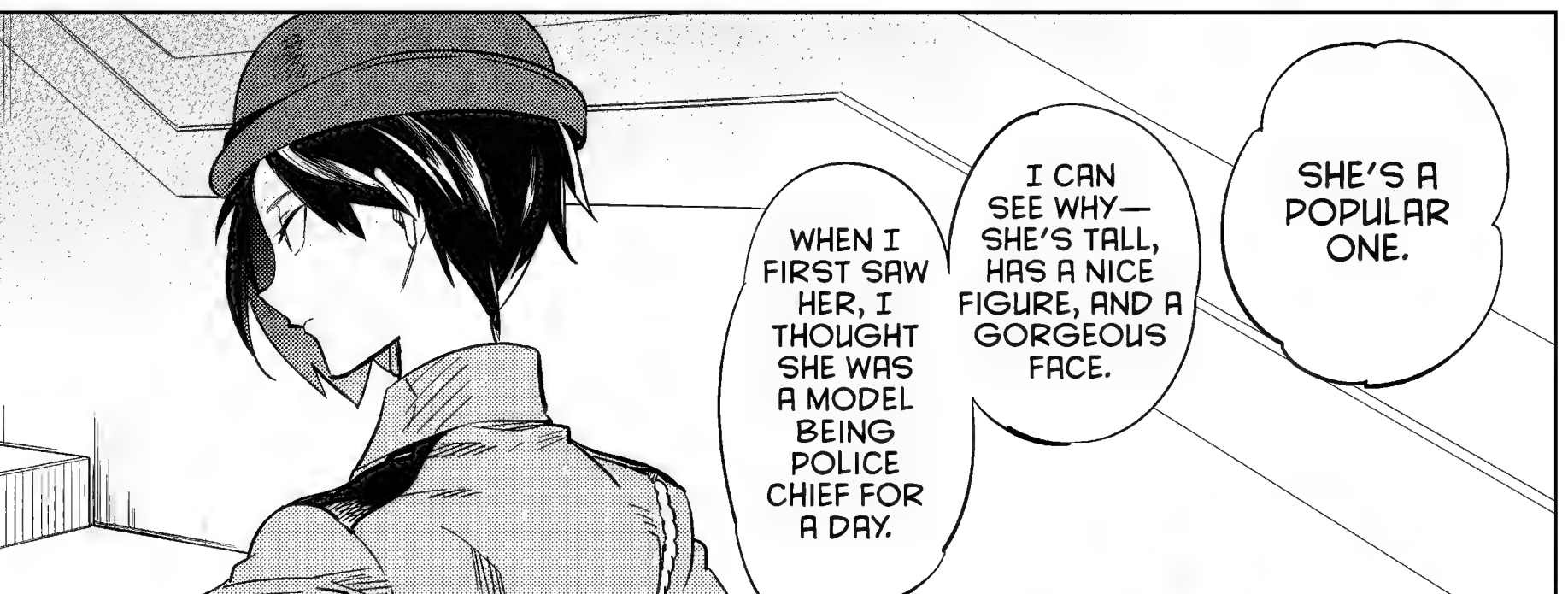
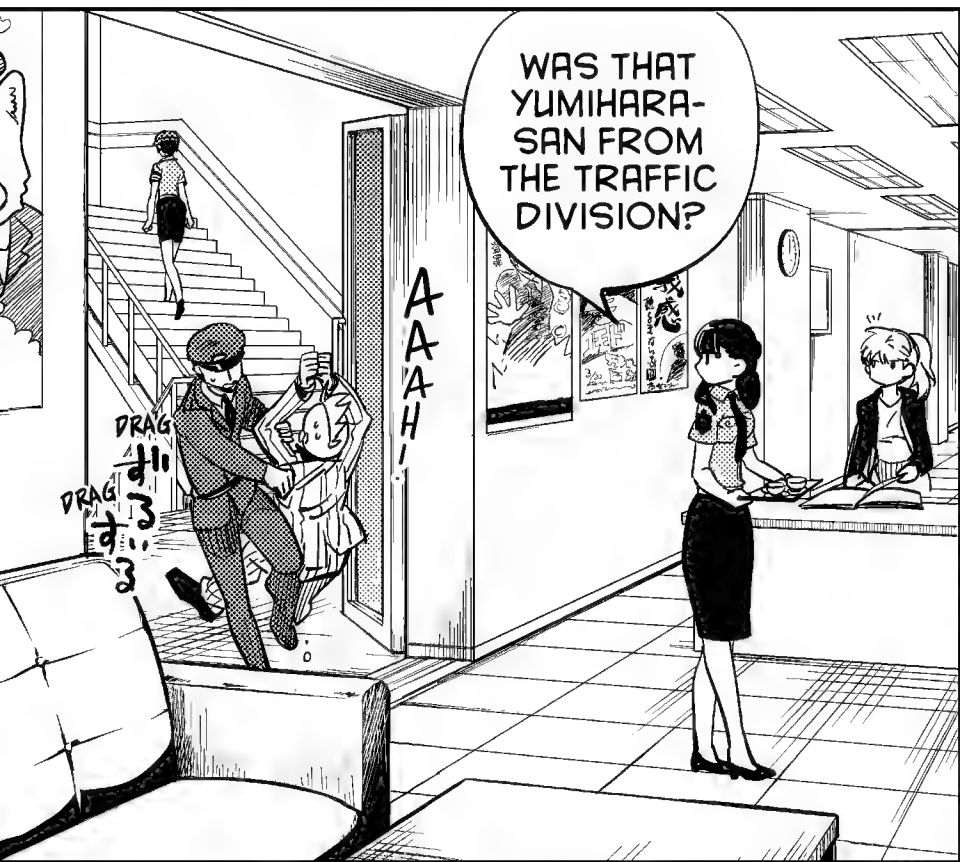
THERE  
WERE  
WHIS-  
PERS  
OF A  
STEEL  
LADY.

IN  
THAT  
TOWN,

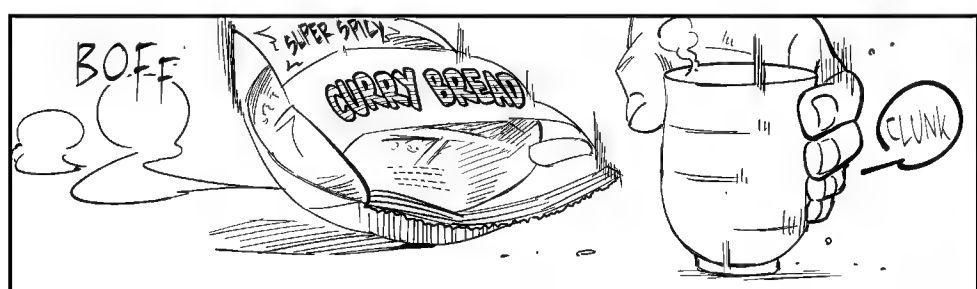
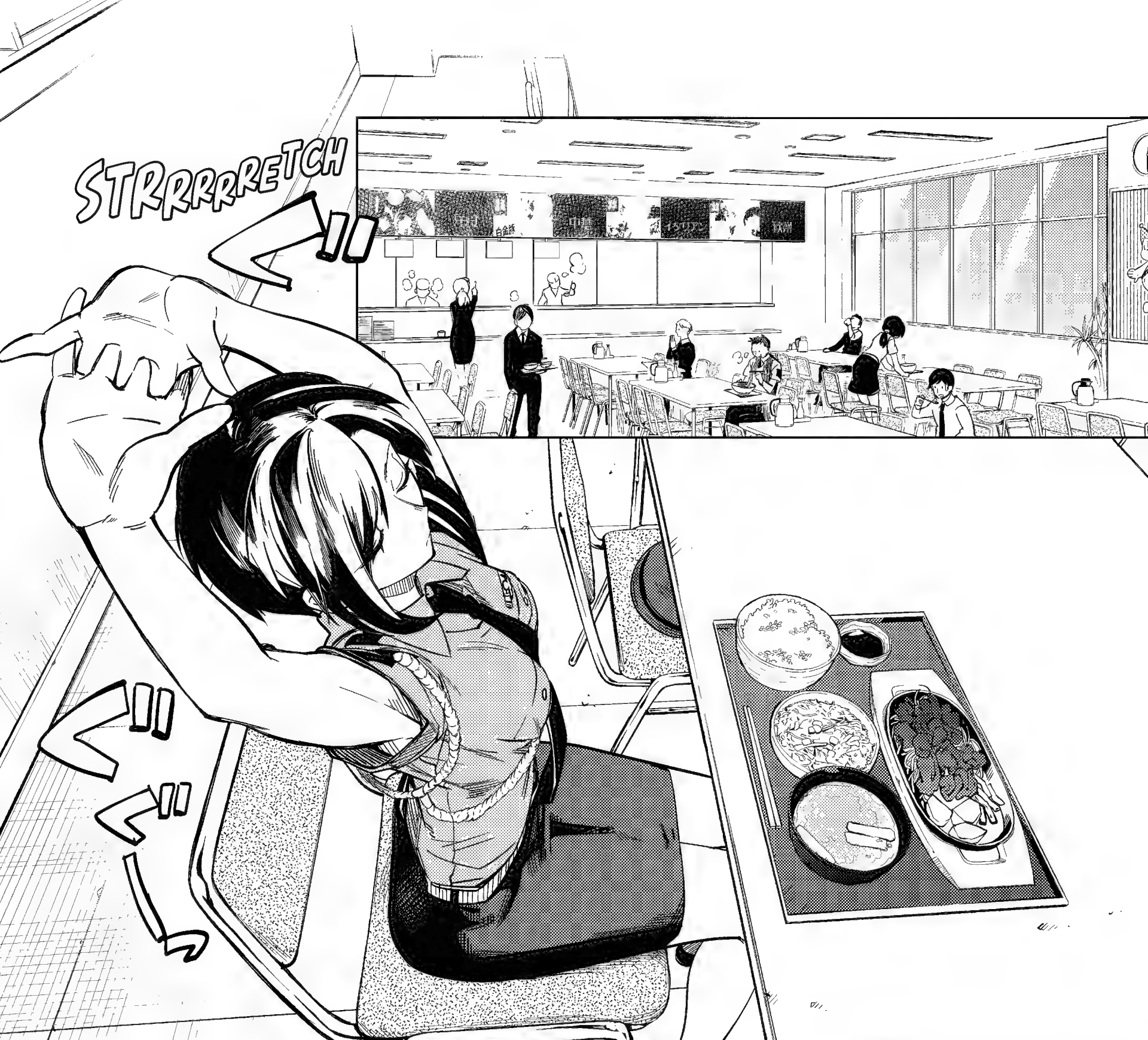




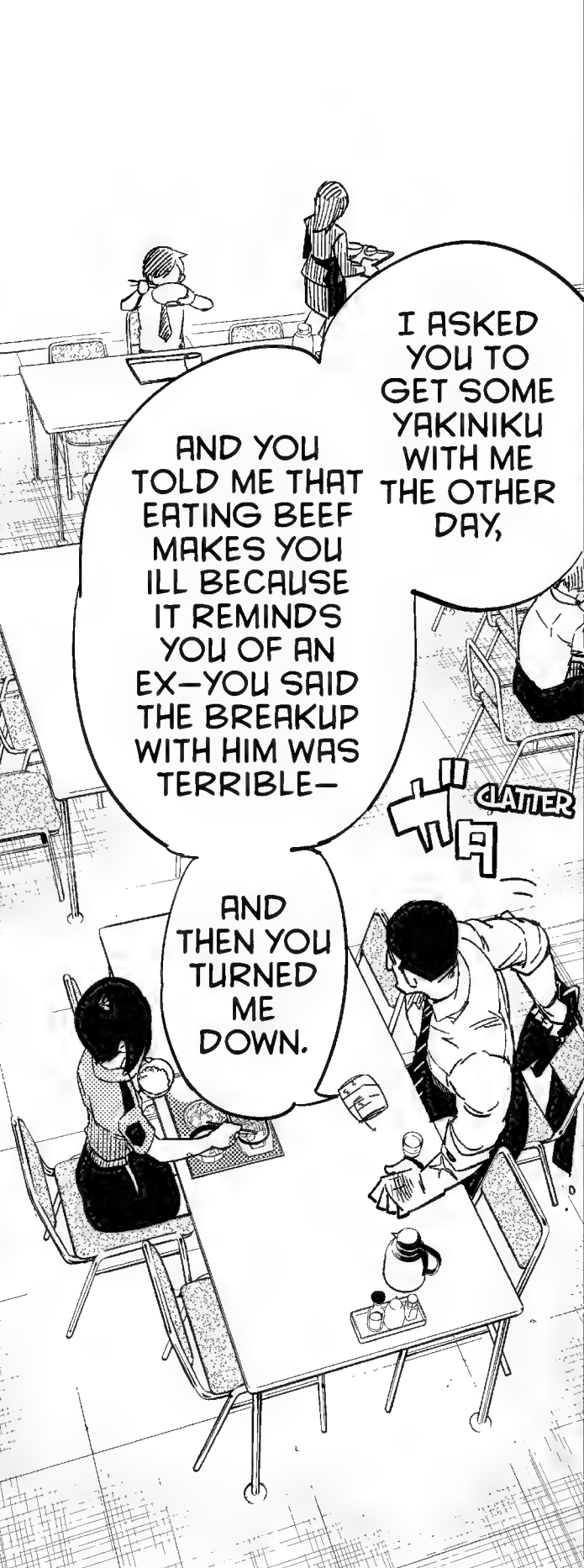












AND YOU TOLD ME THAT EATING BEEF MAKES YOU ILL BECAUSE IT REMINDS YOU OF AN EX—YOU SAID THE BREAKUP WITH HIM WAS TERRIBLE—

I ASKED YOU TO GET SOME YAKINIKU WITH ME THE OTHER DAY,

AND THEN YOU TURNED ME DOWN.

CLATTER



YO, YUMIHARA.

WHAM

WHAM

\*A KOREAN DISH OF MARINATED BEEF SHORTRIBS



...WHY DID YOU ORDER THE GALBI\* MEAL?

SO, YUMIHARA...

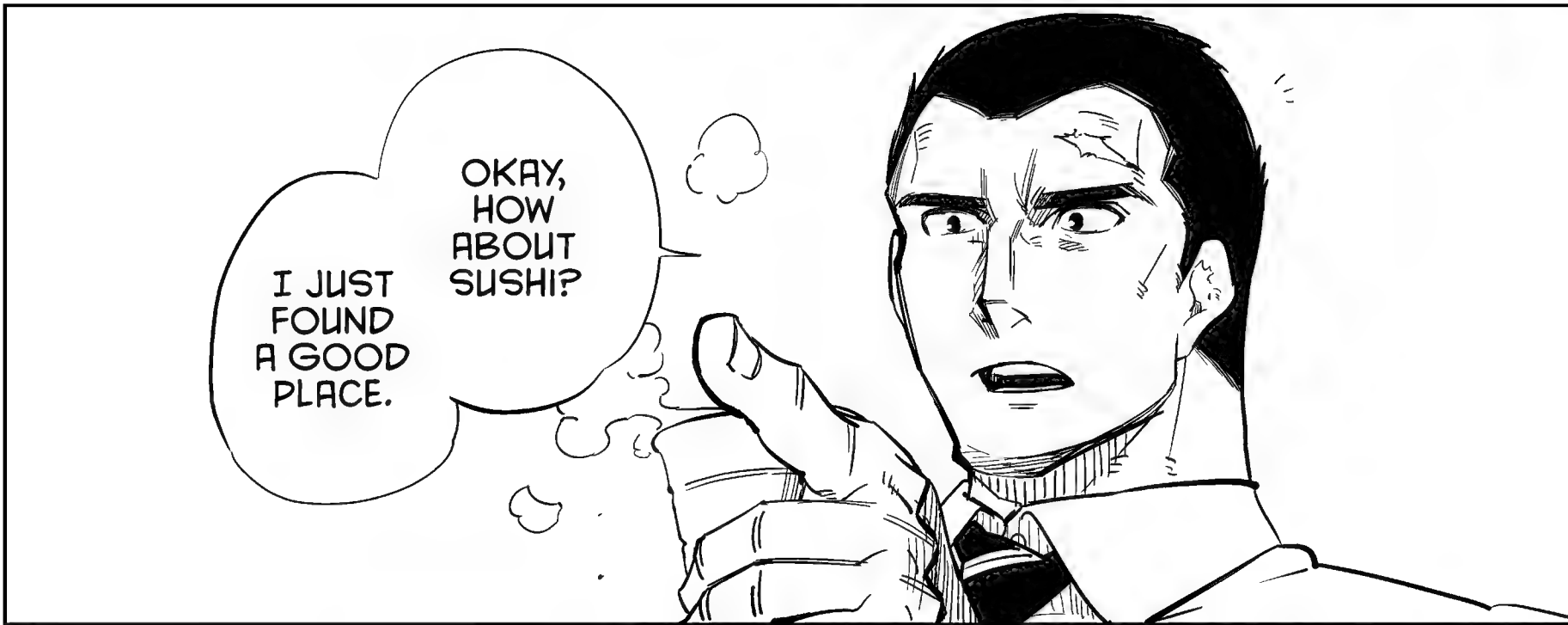
MUNCH

MUNCH

I REMEMBER THAT, TERADA-SAN.

YES.

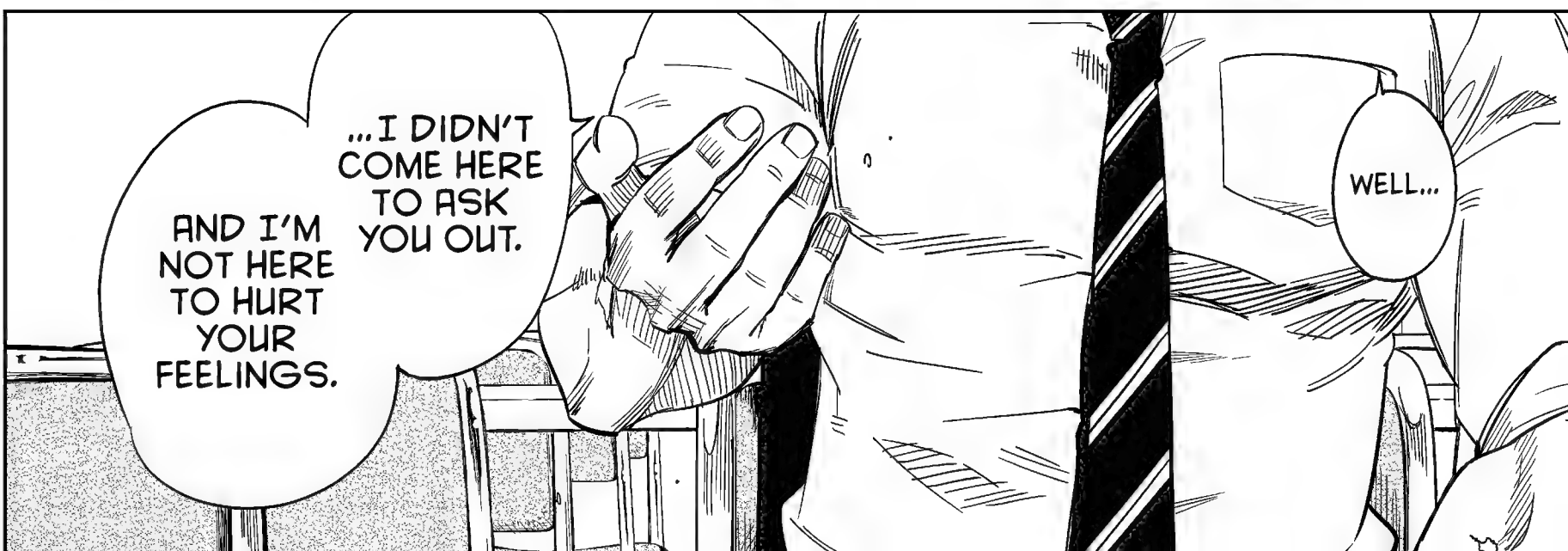




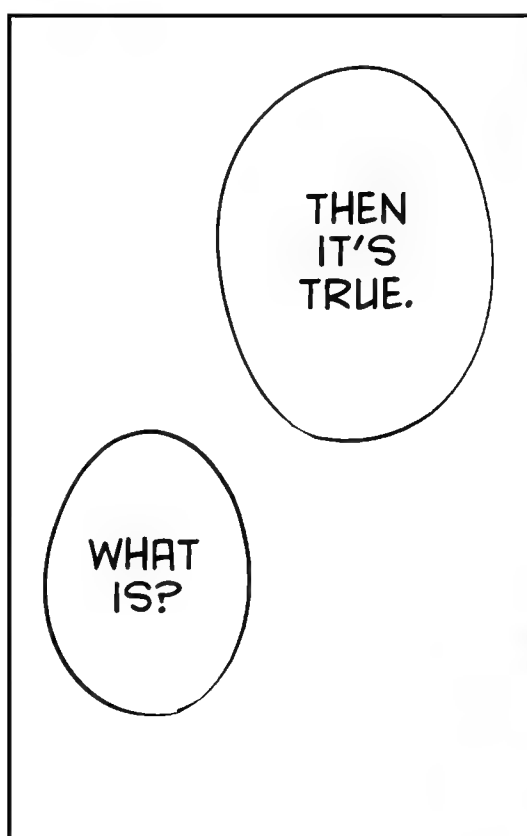
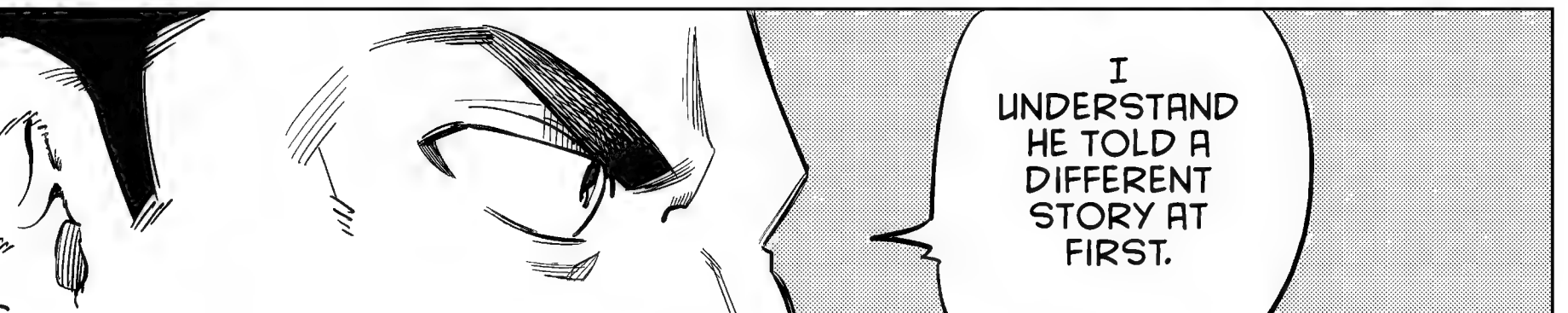














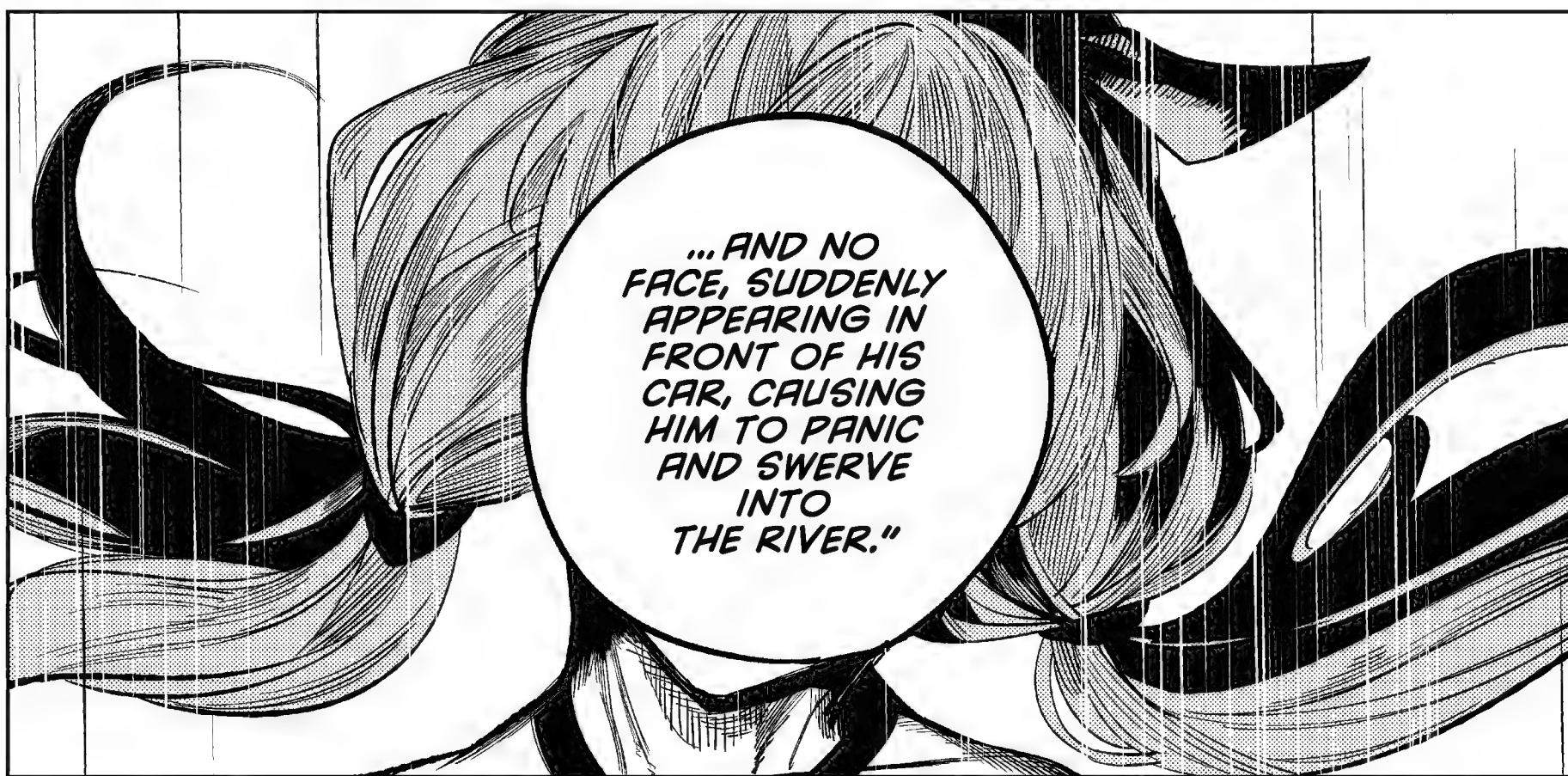


... WITH A  
SHORT,  
FRILLY, RED  
AND BLACK  
DRESS...

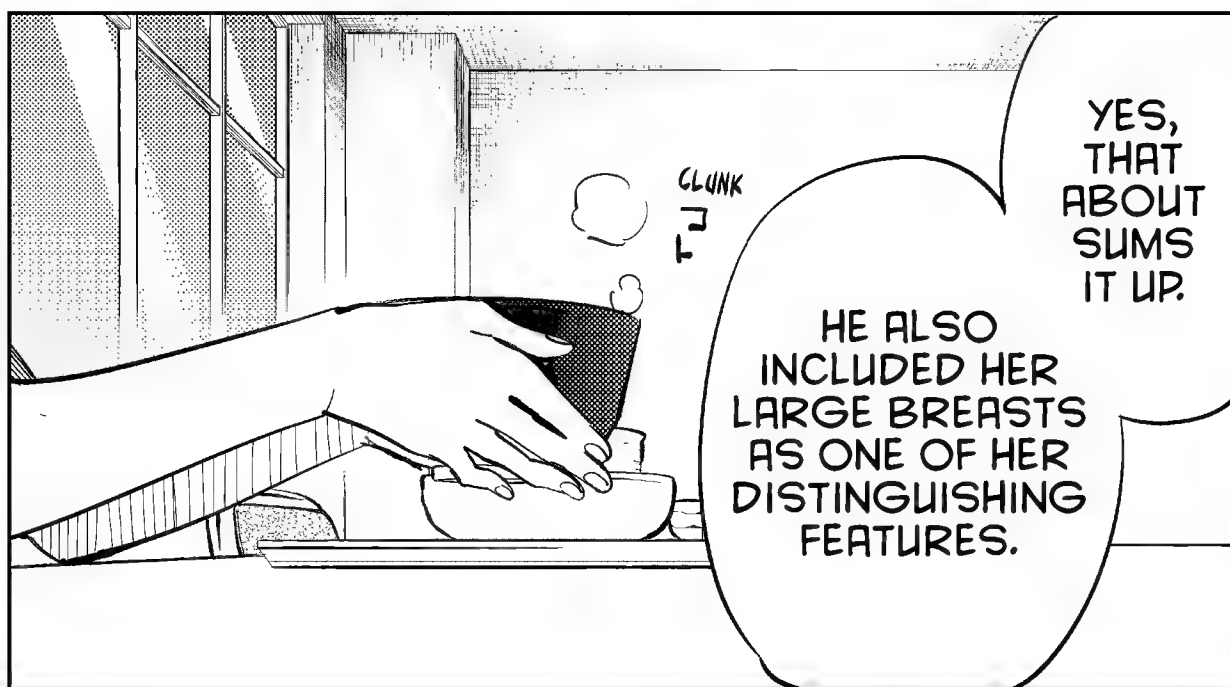
... A BIG  
RIBBON  
ON HER  
HEAD...

... "A  
WOMAN  
CARRYING A  
TWO-METER  
STEEL  
GIRDER..."

THAT THE  
COLLEGE  
STUDENT  
ORIGINALLY  
DESCRIBED



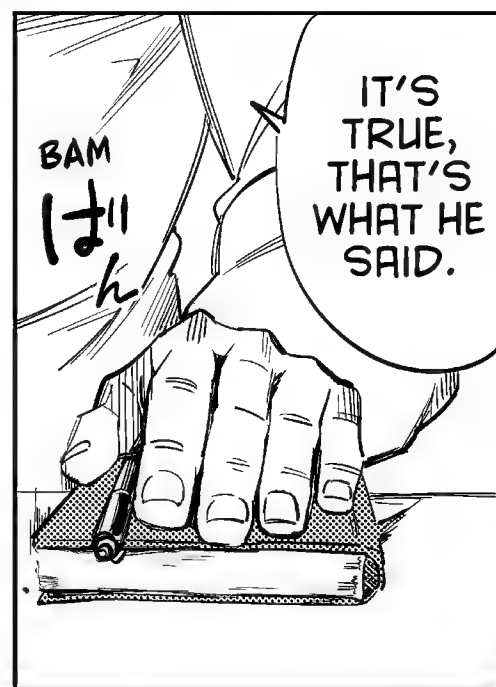
... AND NO  
FACE, SUDDENLY  
APPEARING IN  
FRONT OF HIS  
CAR, CAUSING  
HIM TO PANIC  
AND SWERVE  
INTO  
THE RIVER."



HE ALSO  
INCLUDED HER  
LARGE BREASTS  
AS ONE OF HER  
DISTINGUISHING  
FEATURES.

YES,  
THAT  
ABOUT  
SUMS  
IT UP.

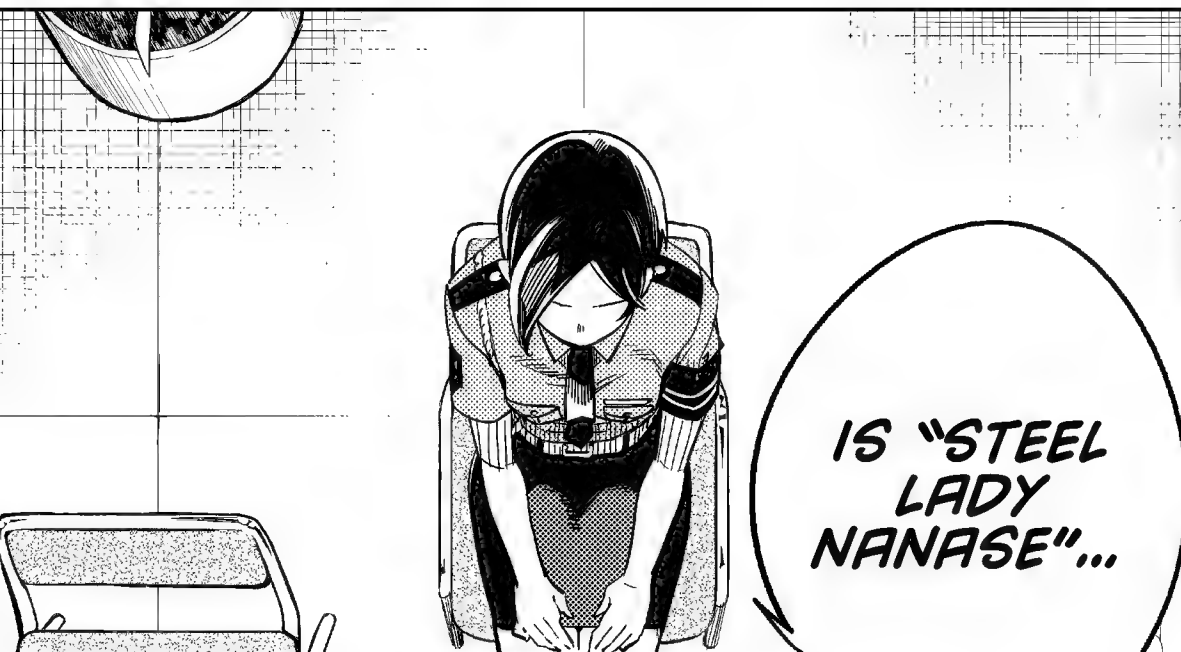
CLUNK  
T T



IT'S  
TRUE,  
THAT'S  
WHAT HE  
SAID.

BAM  
はっ  
ん









I WONDER IF  
THE OWNER OF  
THIS CAR IS  
HERE TO FIND  
STEEL LADY  
NANASE.

A PIN-UP  
PHOTO  
OF KARIN  
NANASE!

OOH!



YES.

IT'S  
IN THE  
RECENT  
GOSSIP.



SO YOU'VE  
HEARD  
THE URBAN  
LEGEND,  
YUMIHARA?



...THE IDOL  
WHO DIED  
HERE IN  
MAKURAZAKA  
EARLY THIS  
YEAR?

YES,  
ISN'T  
SHE...

SCRITCH



STEEL  
LADY  
NANASE?

HAVE  
YOU  
HEARD  
OF KARIN  
NANASE?

YOU  
DON'T  
KNOW?





IT WAS THAT BIG-BUSTED IDOL.

BUT IN LATE JANUARY, THEY FOUND A BODY UNDER A FALLEN STEEL GIRDER AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE NEAR THE HOTEL.

SO SHE CAME TO MAKURAZAKA AND HOLED UP IN A HOTEL TO GET AWAY FROM THEM.

I HADN'T HEARD OF HER UNTIL THE ACCIDENT, BUT APPARENTLY SHE WAS VERY POPULAR.

BUT...

SOME UNSAVORY RUMORS HAD THE MEDIA IN AN UPROAR.

WELL, NOW THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT HER AGAIN.



BUT ONCE THEY DETERMINED IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, EVERYONE STOPPED TALKING ABOUT HER.

OUR LITTLE TOWN DID ATTRACT AN AWFUL LOT OF REPORTERS.



NO...

THEY'VE  
SEEN  
HER.



?



SO THEY  
THINK IT WAS  
SUICIDE?

THE THEORY  
THAT SHE  
KILLED HERSELF  
BECAUSE OF  
ALL THE  
SLANDER AND  
LIBEL WAS  
PRETTY  
CONVINCING.



THE  
FACE-  
LESS  
GHOST

OF KARIN  
NANASE!!



SHE APPEARS  
EVERY NIGHT IN  
MAKURAZAKA  
CITY.



AND  
CARRIES IN  
ONE HAND  
THE STEEL  
BEAM THAT  
CRUSHED  
HER.

SHE WEARS  
A COSTUME  
FROM HER  
IDOL DAYS,





YUMIHARA-SAN,  
I DIDN'T KNOW  
YOU DON'T  
LIKE GHOST  
STORIES.

GASP

SNAP



MY LITTLE  
SISTER SAYS  
IT'S WHAT ALL  
HER MIDDLE- AND  
HIGH-SCHOOL  
FRIENDS ARE  
TALKING ABOUT.

Yeah  
right!

THEY NAMED HER  
"STEEL LADY NANASE"  
AFTER THE STEEL BEAM  
SHE WIELDS. SHE'S  
GOING VIRAL ON THE  
INTERNET TOO.

OH...



STEEL  
LADY  
NANASE.

IT'S A  
CATCHY  
NAME,

IT'S  
OKAY.

OH.

I'M  
SORRY!



MAYBE  
THAT'S WHY  
HER GHOST  
HAS NO FACE,  
LIKE IT'S BEEN  
SMASHED IN.

HER  
FACE WAS  
BRUTALLY  
CRUSHED BY  
THAT STEEL  
BEAM.



BECAUSE SHE CARRIES A STEEL BEAM THAT LOOKS TOO BIG FOR HER SLENDER, FEMININE PHYSIQUE, SHE WAS GIVEN THE NICKNAME STEEL LADY NANASE.

SHE CRAWLED OUT FROM UNDER THAT STEEL GIRDER AND WAS REBORN.



MORE OF A GHOST STORY THAN AN URBAN LEGEND.

IT MAKES FOR AN INTERESTING STORY, BUT IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A RUMOR.

MAYBE IT'S THE EVER-SO-SLIGHTLY UNNATURAL RING TO IT THAT MAKES IT STICK IN YOUR MEMORY.



IS THERE SOME GHOST OR PHANTOM NAMED STEEL LADY NANASE WANDERING OUR STREETS?

MRSH  
むし

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

RP !! 7





AND HE  
DIDN'T  
SEEM  
TO BE  
LYING?



ONCE THAT  
OCCURRED  
TO HIM, HE  
DENIED IT ALL  
AND STARTED  
GIVING  
A MORE  
BELIEVABLE  
EXCUSE.

IT-IT WAS  
A WOMAN  
IN A WEIRD  
GETUP...!

BUT HE  
DIDN'T SEEM  
TO REALIZE  
THAT THAT'S  
WHAT HE SAW  
UNTIL HE  
WAS IN THE  
MIDDLE OF  
DESCRIBING  
THE ACCIDENT  
TO ME.

THE DRIVER  
THREE DAYS  
AGO HAD  
HEARD  
ABOUT  
STEEL LADY  
NANASE.



AND I  
DETERMINED  
THAT GHOST  
STORIES DO  
NOT BELONG  
IN POLICE  
REPORTS.

WHETHER IT  
WAS A DOG  
OR A GHOST  
THAT JUMPED  
OUT AT HIM  
DOESN'T  
CHANGE THE  
OUTCOME,  
SO I DIDN'T  
PRESS FOR  
DETAILS.

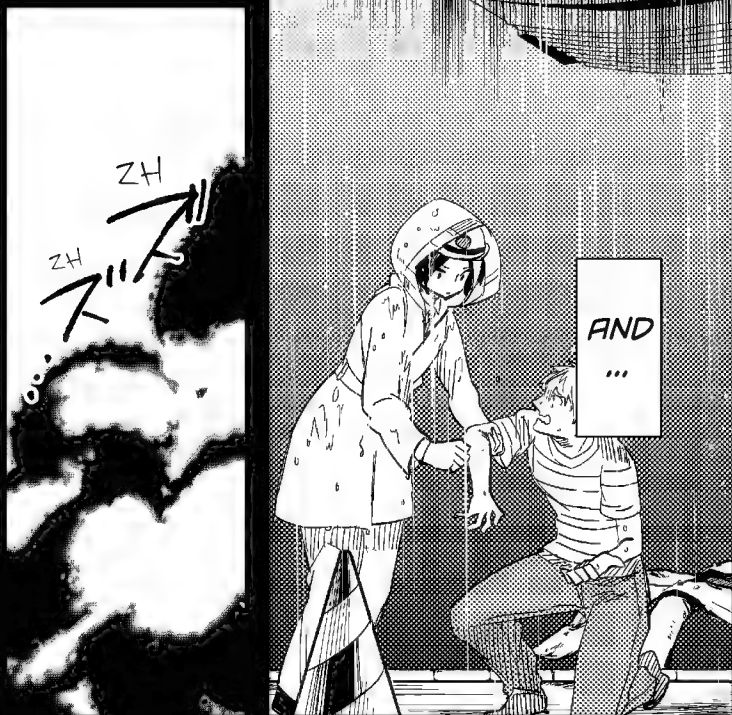
... WHY IS  
TERADA-SAN  
PRYING  
INTO THIS  
INCIDENT?



IN YOUR  
OWN OPINION,  
DID HE SEE A  
WOMAN WITH A  
STEEL BEAM?  
OR DIDN'T HE?

I'M NOT  
TRYING TO  
ACCUSE YOU  
OF ANYTHING.





AND ...



THE FEAR  
IN HIS  
EYES,  
THE TIRE  
TRACKS,  
THE  
BROKEN  
GUARD  
RAIL.



BAH

SHUDDER

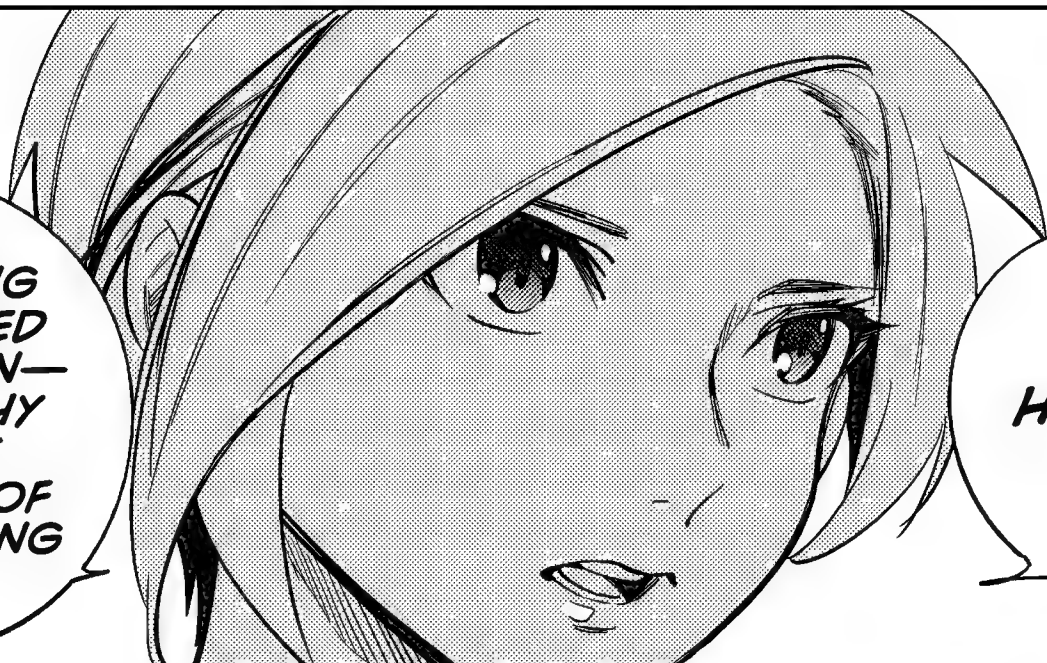


WAKURAZAKA POLICE

SOMETHING  
OTHER-  
WORLDLY  
HAD BEEN  
THERE.

THE EERIE  
FEELING  
HANGING  
IN THE  
AIR—ALL  
OF THAT  
WAS REAL.





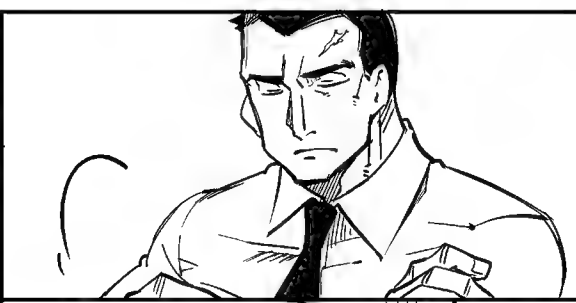
HE SAW  
SOMETHING  
THAT DEFIED  
ALL REASON—  
THAT'S WHY  
HE LOST  
CONTROL OF  
THE STEERING  
WHEEL.

HE DID.




THEY  
WENT  
STRAIGHT  
TO THE  
POLICE  
BOX?

...!



A FEW OFFICERS  
HAVE HAD PEOPLE  
COME INTO THEIR  
POLICE BOXES,  
SAYING THEY SAW OR  
WERE ALMOST ATTACKED  
BY A SUSPICIOUS PER-  
SON THAT MATCHED  
THE STEEL LADY'S  
DESCRIPTION.



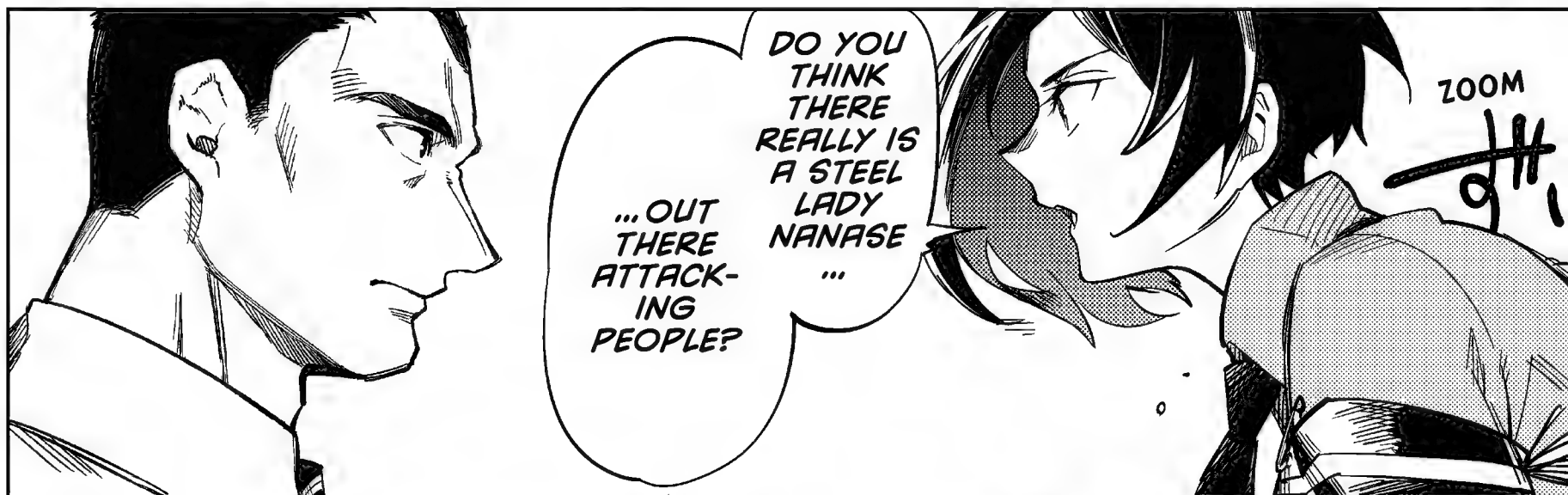
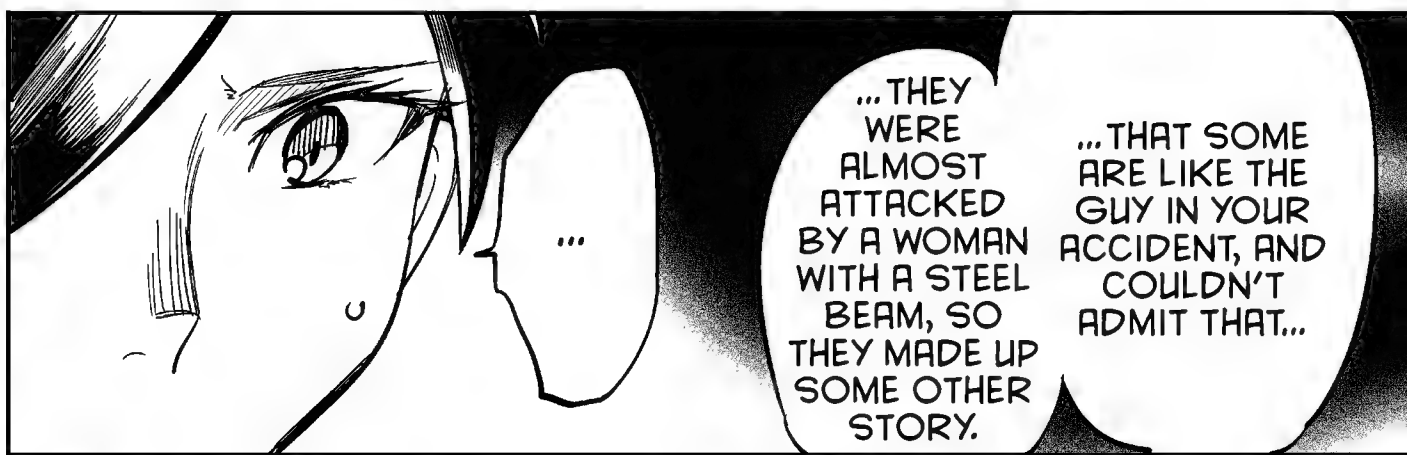
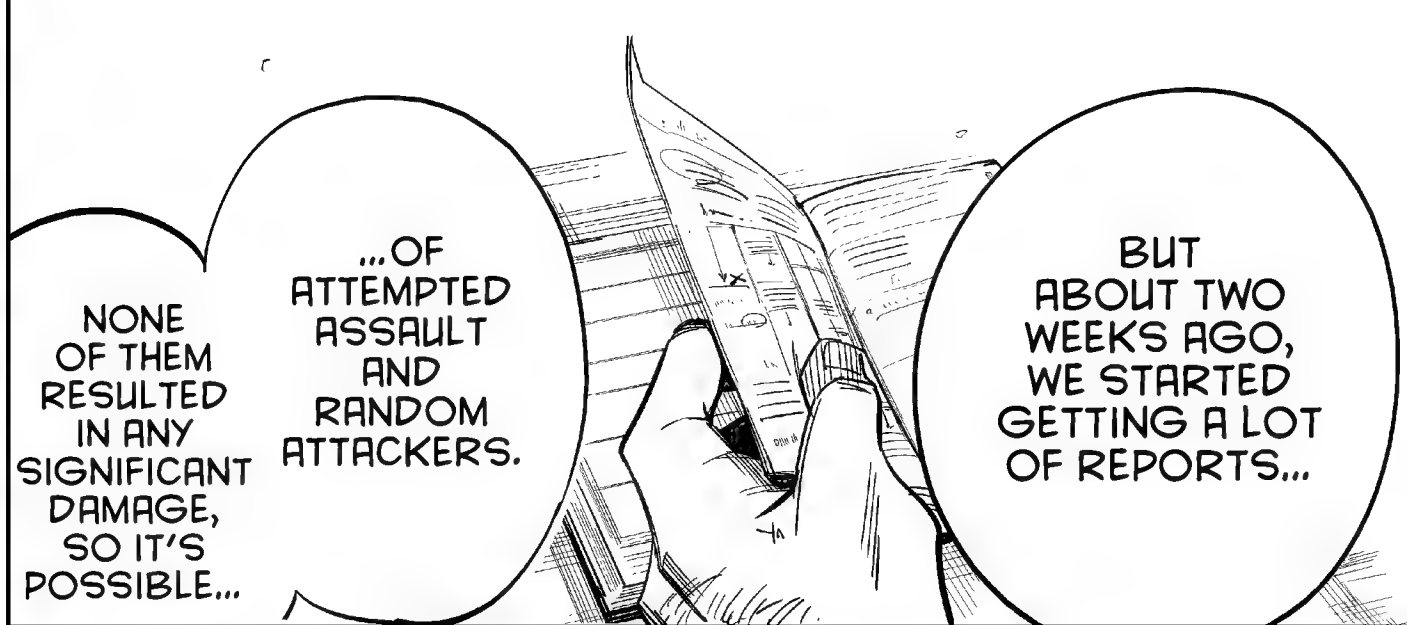
THEY  
GENERALLY  
WRITE IT OFF  
AS A CASE OF  
MISTAKEN  
IDENTITY OR  
FIGMENTS  
OF THE  
IMAGINATION.

IS STEEL  
LADY  
NANASE  
REALLY  
THAT  
EXTRAOR-  
DINARY?

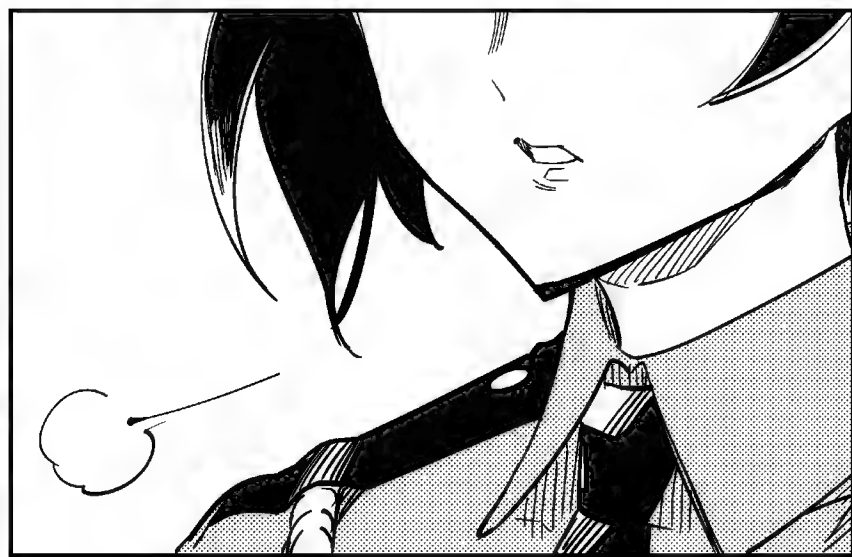
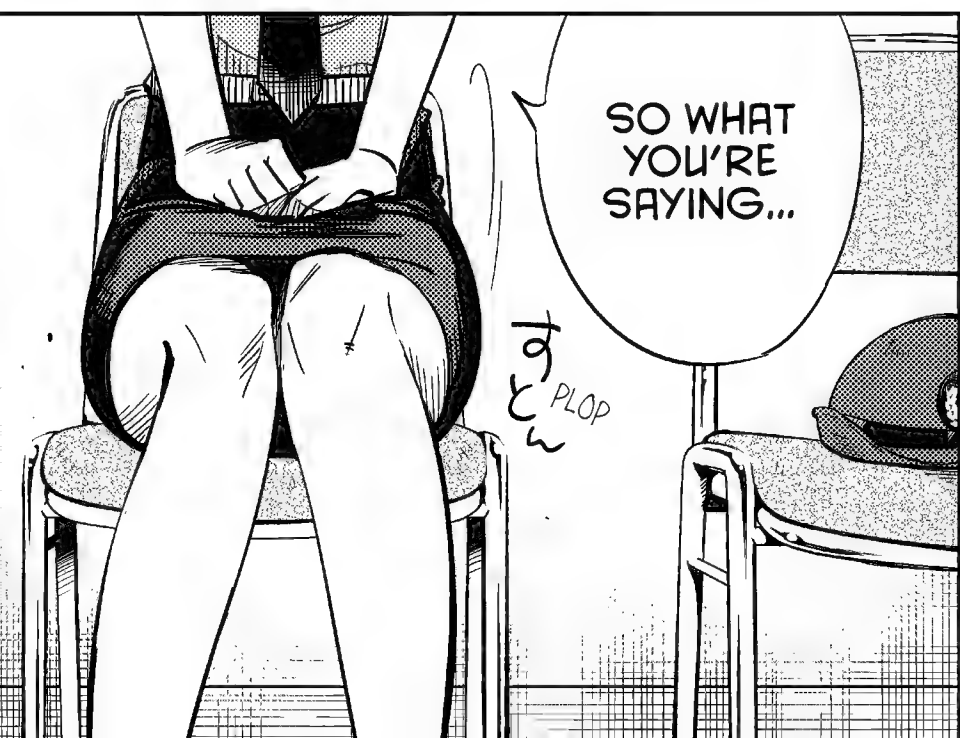
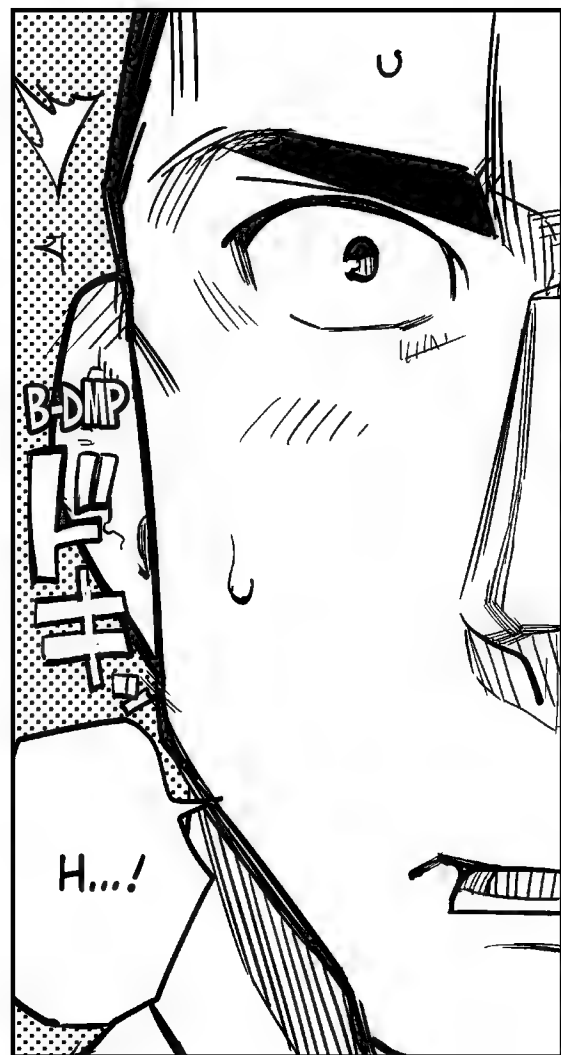
IT'S EVEN  
MORE UNUSUAL  
TO HEAR IT  
STRAIGHT FROM  
THE VICTIM,  
RATHER THAN  
HEARSAY FROM  
A THIRD PARTY.

Rumors  
among the  
traffic division  
notwithstand-  
ing

STORIES  
ABOUT  
GHOSTS DON'T  
USUALLY GET  
AS FAR AS  
THE POLICE  
STATION.









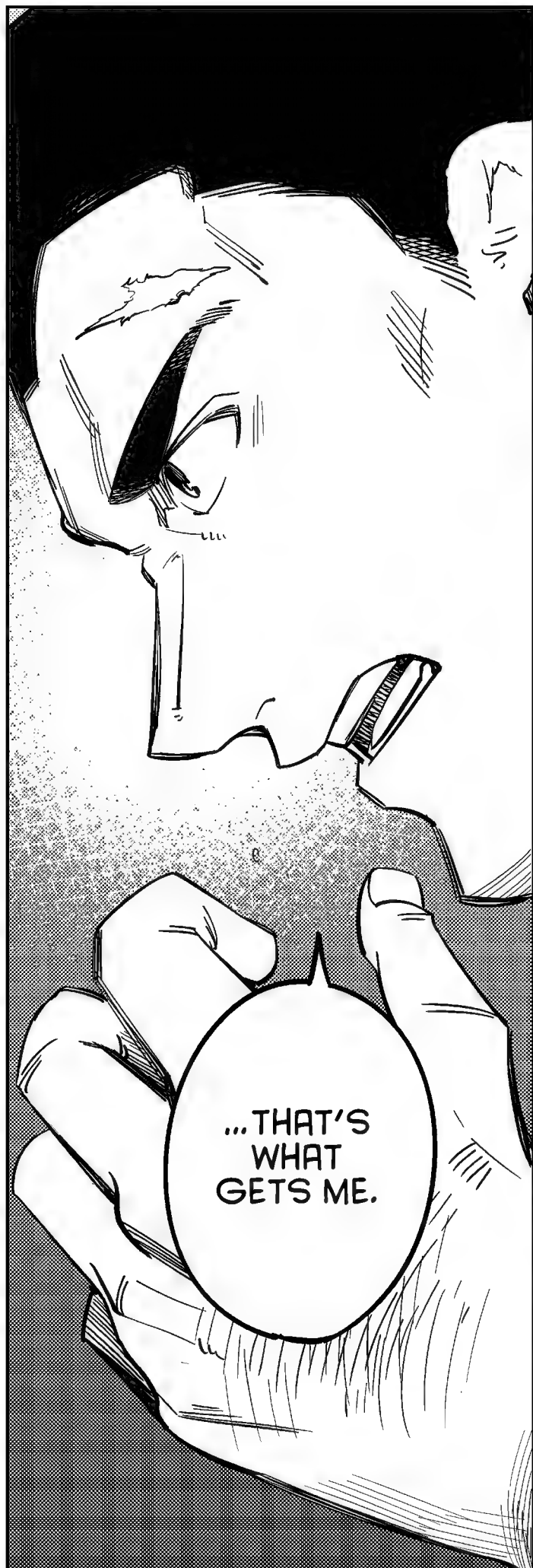
THEY SAY  
THE LATE  
KARIN  
NANASE  
HAD A BUST  
MEASURE-  
MENT OF  
OVER 100  
CENTIME-  
TERS\*.

AND  
SHE MAY BE  
ENHANCING  
HER BREASTS  
WITH  
PADDING.



...IS THAT  
SOMEBODY  
SOMEWHERE  
IS WANDERING  
AROUND TOWN,  
BRANDISHING  
A STEEL  
GIRDER AND  
PRETENDING  
TO BE A  
DECEASED  
POP STAR?

\*ABOUT 39IN.



...THAT'S  
WHAT  
GETS ME.

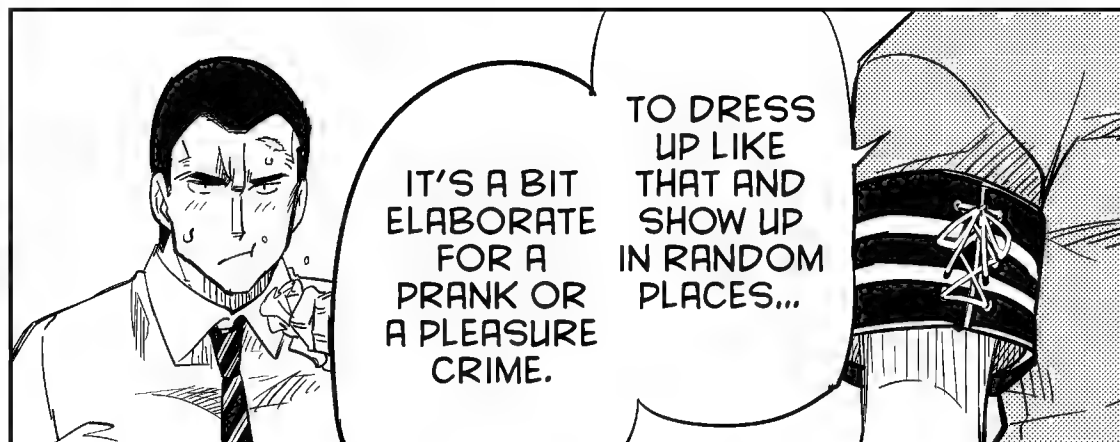


YEAH. NOT  
MY TYPE,  
THOUGH.

ARE YOU  
TRYING TO  
INSINUATE  
THAT MY  
BREASTS ARE  
SMALL?

NO!

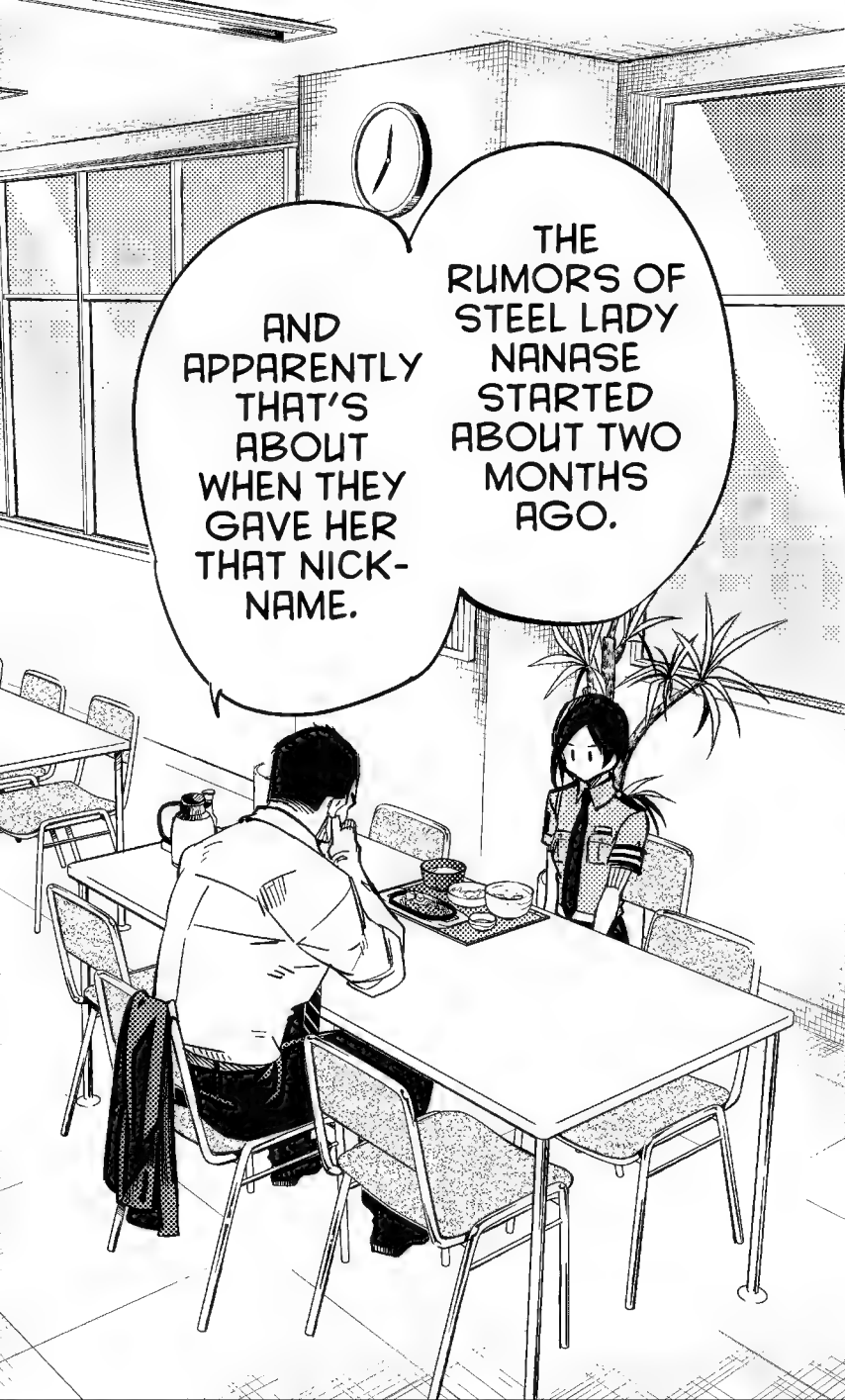
THAT  
IS BIG.



IT'S A BIT  
ELABORATE  
FOR A  
PRANK OR  
A PLEASURE  
CRIME.

TO DRESS  
UP LIKE  
THAT AND  
SHOW UP  
IN RANDOM  
PLACES...





AND APPARENTLY THAT'S ABOUT WHEN THEY GAVE HER THAT NICK-NAME.

THE RUMORS OF STEEL LADY NANASE STARTED ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO.

SOME-THING THAT'S MORE THAN JUST A PRANK.

IT WOULD HAVE TO BE FOR A PRETTY BIG REASON, WITH A PRETTY BIG GOAL BEHIND IT.

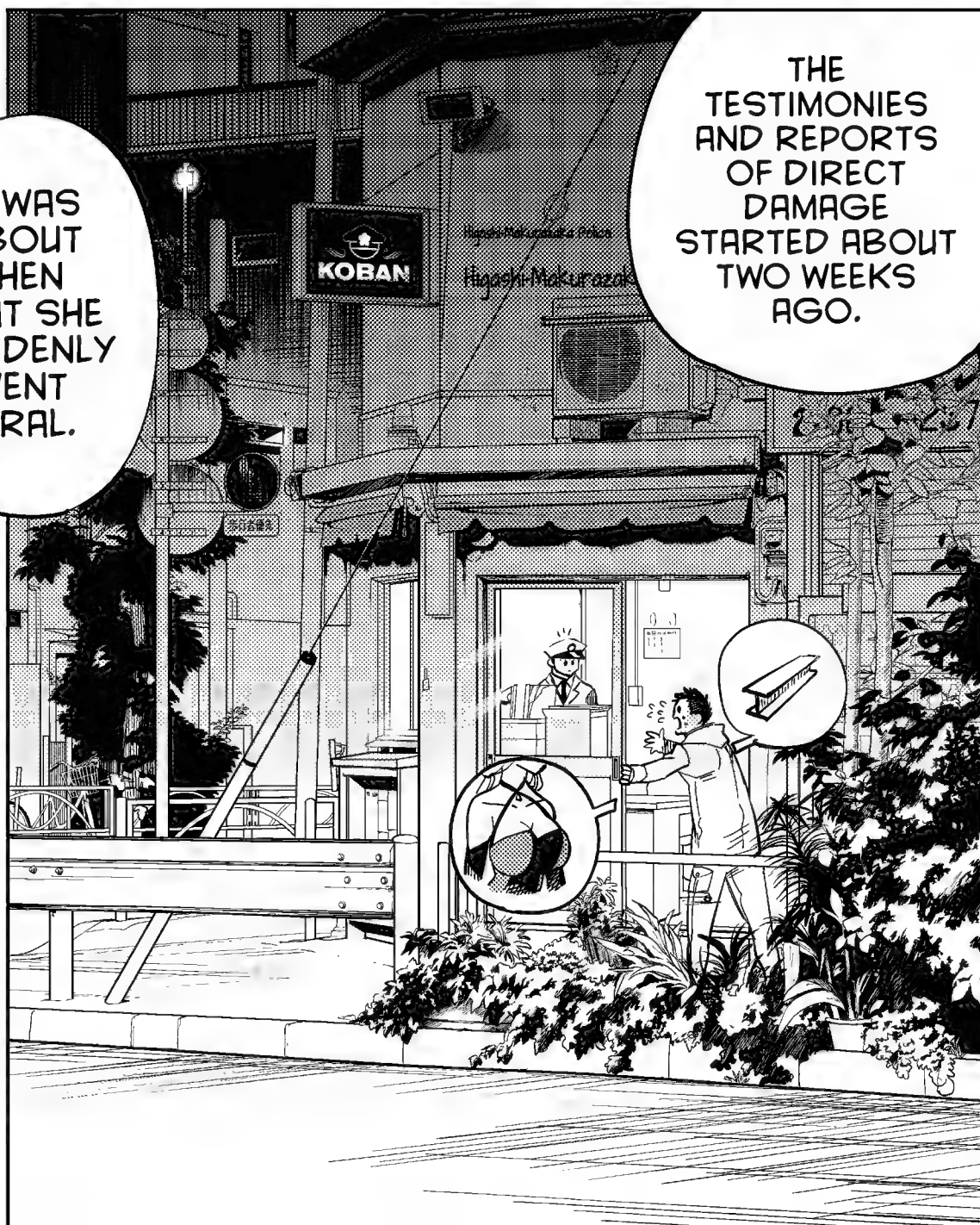
IF SOMEONE WERE TO GO TO THAT KIND OF TROUBLE,

GASP



THERE WAS ENOUGH TIME BETWEEN THOSE EVENTS FOR HER TO GET READY.

IT WAS ABOUT THEN THAT SHE SUDDENLY WENT VIRAL.



THE TESTIMONIES AND REPORTS OF DIRECT DAMAGE STARTED ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO.



...IS IT  
DETECTIVE'S  
INTUITION?

DO YOU  
HAVE ANY  
GUESSES  
AS TO WHY  
SOMEONE  
WOULD IM-  
PERSONATE  
A BUSTY  
GHOST?



AND  
THEN SHE  
STARTED  
MAKING HER  
MOVE.



NO.



BUT  
THERE IS  
SOMETHING  
OUT THERE.



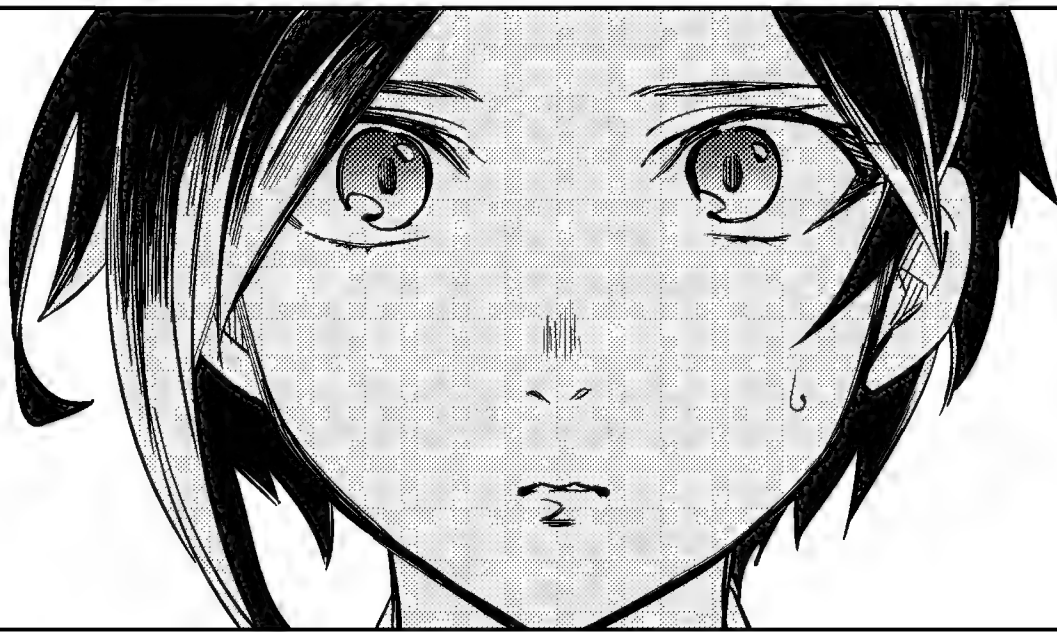
GLUG

CONSIDER-  
ING THE  
SITUATION,  
I HAVE  
TO TREAD  
CAREFULLY.

IT  
DOESN'T  
LOOK  
GOOD FOR  
A COP TO  
BE TAKING  
RUMORS  
TOO SERI-  
OUSLY.



BUT...  
STEEL  
LADY  
NANASE  
IS REAL.



TERADA-  
SAN SENSES  
SOMETHING  
OMINOUS BEHIND  
THE STEEL LADY'S  
APPEARANCE—  
SOME BIG CRIME  
ABOUT TO TAKE  
PLACE.

SOME-  
BODY'S  
GOTTA  
PUT OUT  
FEELERS  
RIGHT  
NOW.

THESE DAYS,  
IT'S EASY FOR  
A PROVINCIAL  
TOWN LIKE OURS  
TO TURN INTO A  
HOTBED FOR  
ORGANIZED  
CRIME.

CLATTER



SHE'S  
A REAL  
GHOST.

SHE'S NOT  
PLOTTING  
ANYTHING  
CRIMINAL.



I'D  
APPRECIATE  
YOUR HELP.

WHATEVER  
SHE'S UP TO,  
THE POLICE  
CAN'T STOP  
HER.

CLENCH



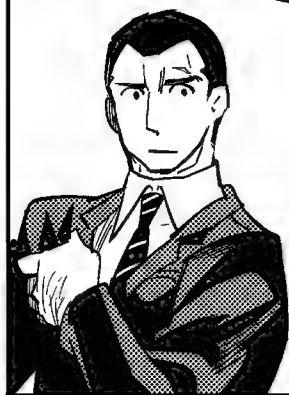
THERE  
MAY  
BE A  
PATTERN.

I'M  
MARKING A  
MAP WITH ALL  
THE SPOTS  
IN TOWN  
WHERE STEEL  
LADY NANASE  
HAS BEEN  
SIGHTED.

JUST  
CASUALLY  
ASK AROUND  
ABOUT THE  
RUMORS, SEE  
WHAT YOU CAN  
FIND ON THE  
INTERNET.

1#4  
RUSTLE

IT'S WHEN THEY  
LURK ABOUT  
THAT YOU SENSE  
SOMETHING  
SINISTER AND  
OMINOUS AND  
GET A FEELING  
THAT SOMETHING  
IS ABOUT  
TO HAPPEN.



TE-  
RADA-  
SAN.

I'D  
LIKE  
YOU TO  
CON-  
SIDER...

...THE  
POSSIBILITY  
THAT GHOSTS  
AND YÔKAI  
MAY ACTUALLY  
EXIST IN THIS  
WORLD.



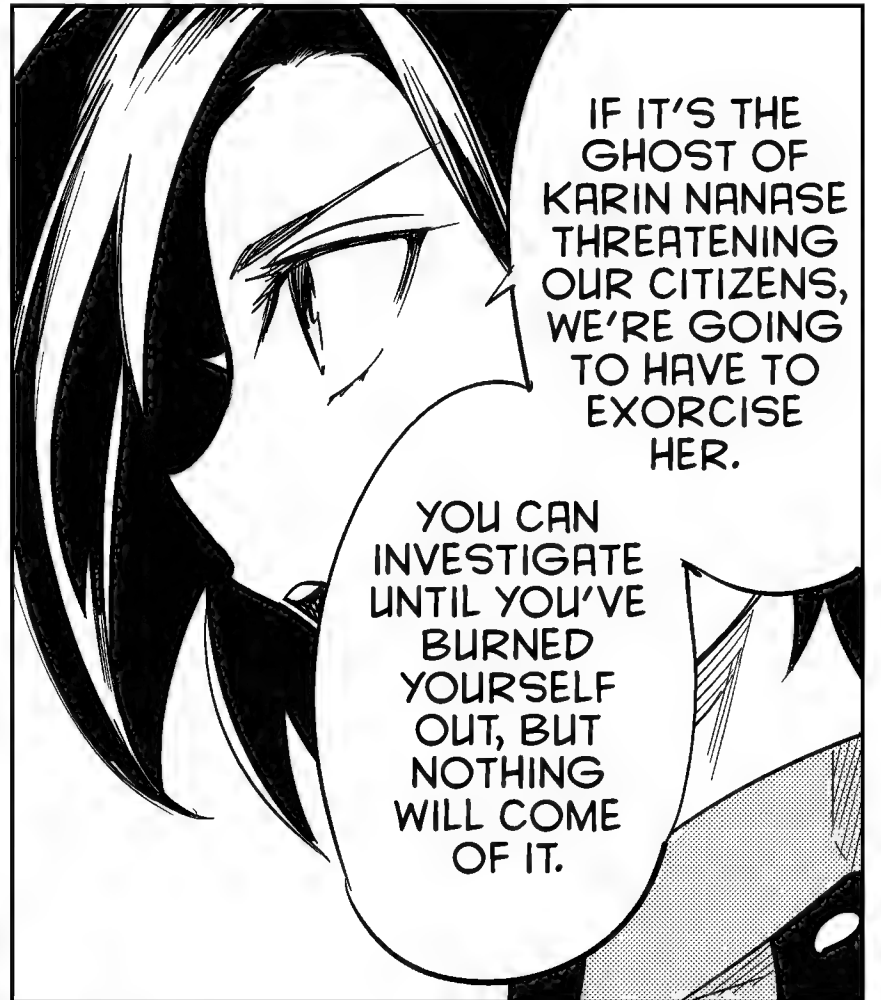


HM?



I DIDN'T  
KNOW YOU  
BELIEVED  
IN THAT  
STUFF.

WHAT'S  
THIS,  
YUMI-  
HARA?



IF IT'S THE  
GHOST OF  
KARIN NANASE  
THREATENING  
OUR CITIZENS,  
WE'RE GOING  
TO HAVE TO  
EXORCISE  
HER.

YOU CAN  
INVESTIGATE  
UNTIL YOU'VE  
BURNED  
YOURSELF  
OUT, BUT  
NOTHING  
WILL COME  
OF IT.

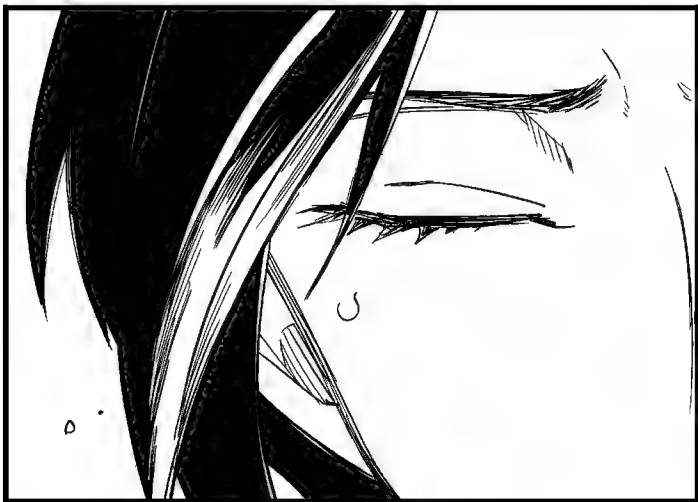
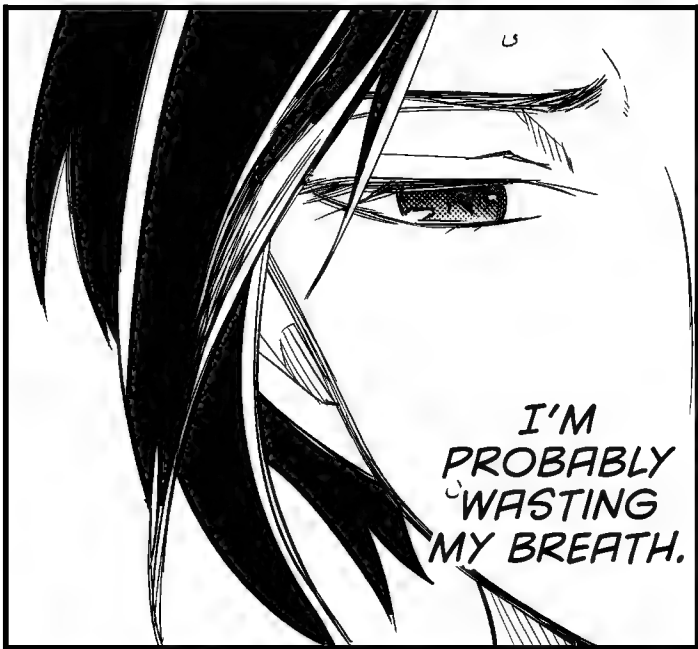


WHAT  
IS THIS  
ABOUT? IF  
YOU DON'T  
WANT TO  
HELP, JUST  
SAY SO.

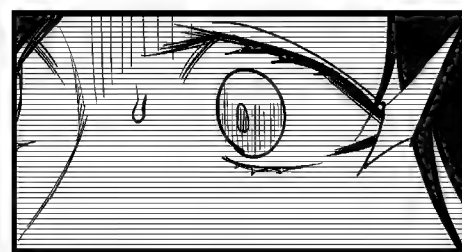
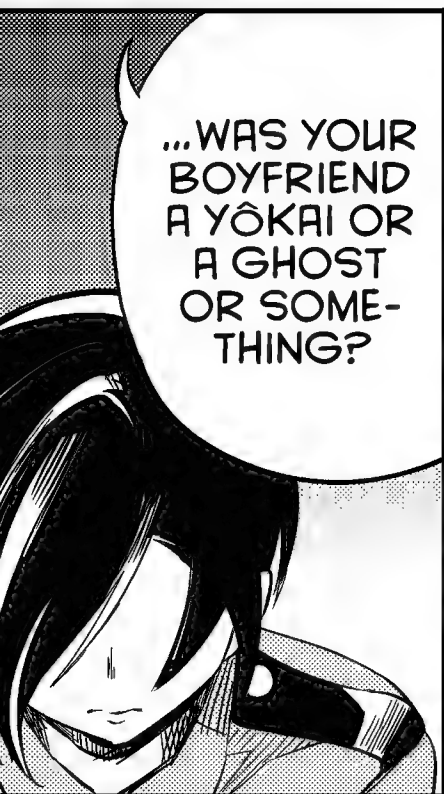
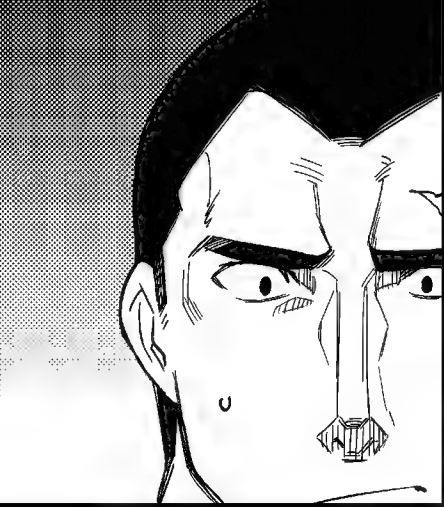
I KNOW  
I'M  
ASKING  
A LOT.

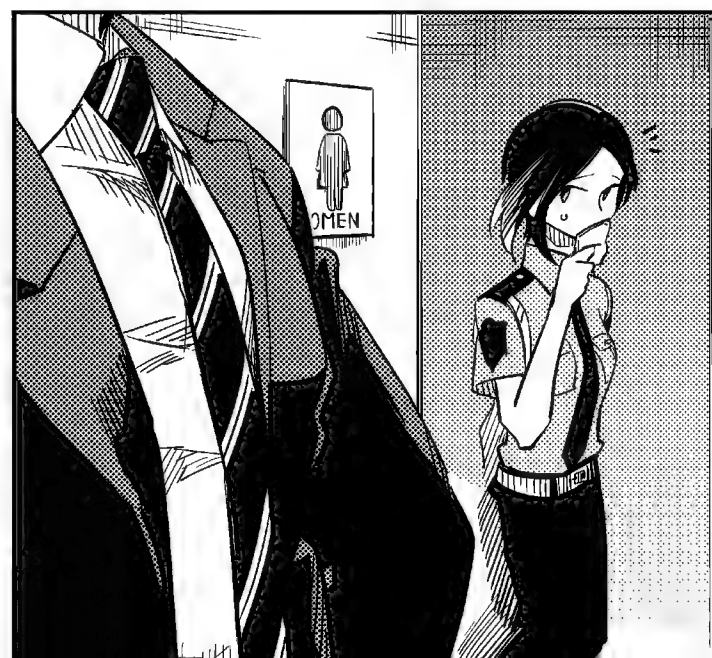
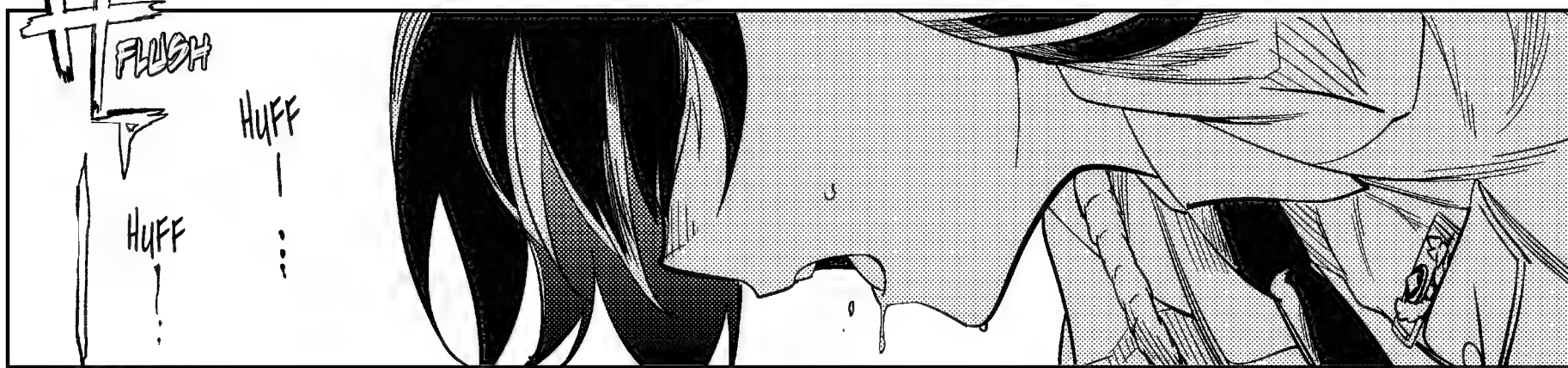


...I'VE  
NEVER SEEN  
A GHOST, BUT  
I HAVE SEEN  
A YÔKAI.







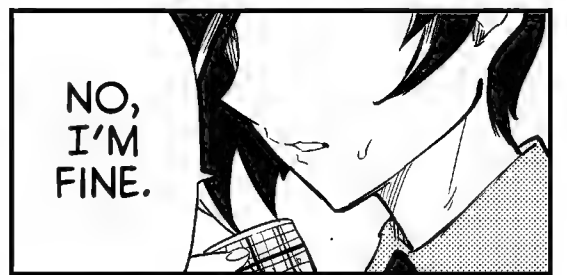




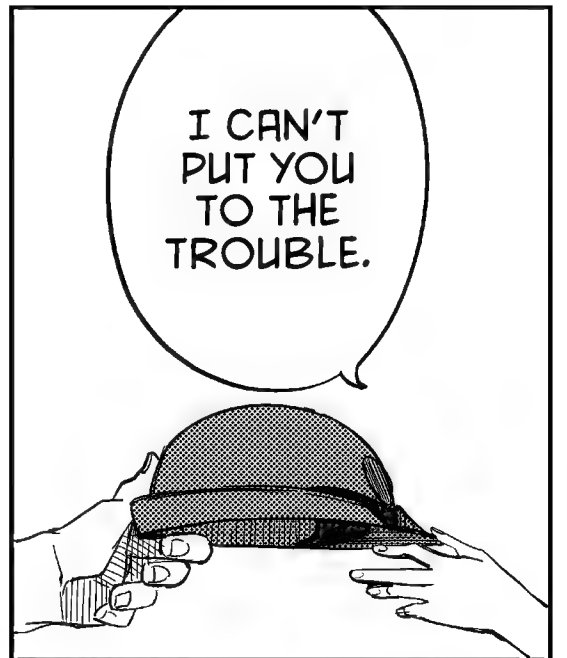


SO PLEASE,  
BE CARE-  
FUL.

ANYWAY,  
TERADA-SAN.  
THERE EXIST  
THINGS  
BEYOND OUR  
UNDERSTAND-  
ING.



NO,  
I'M  
FINE.

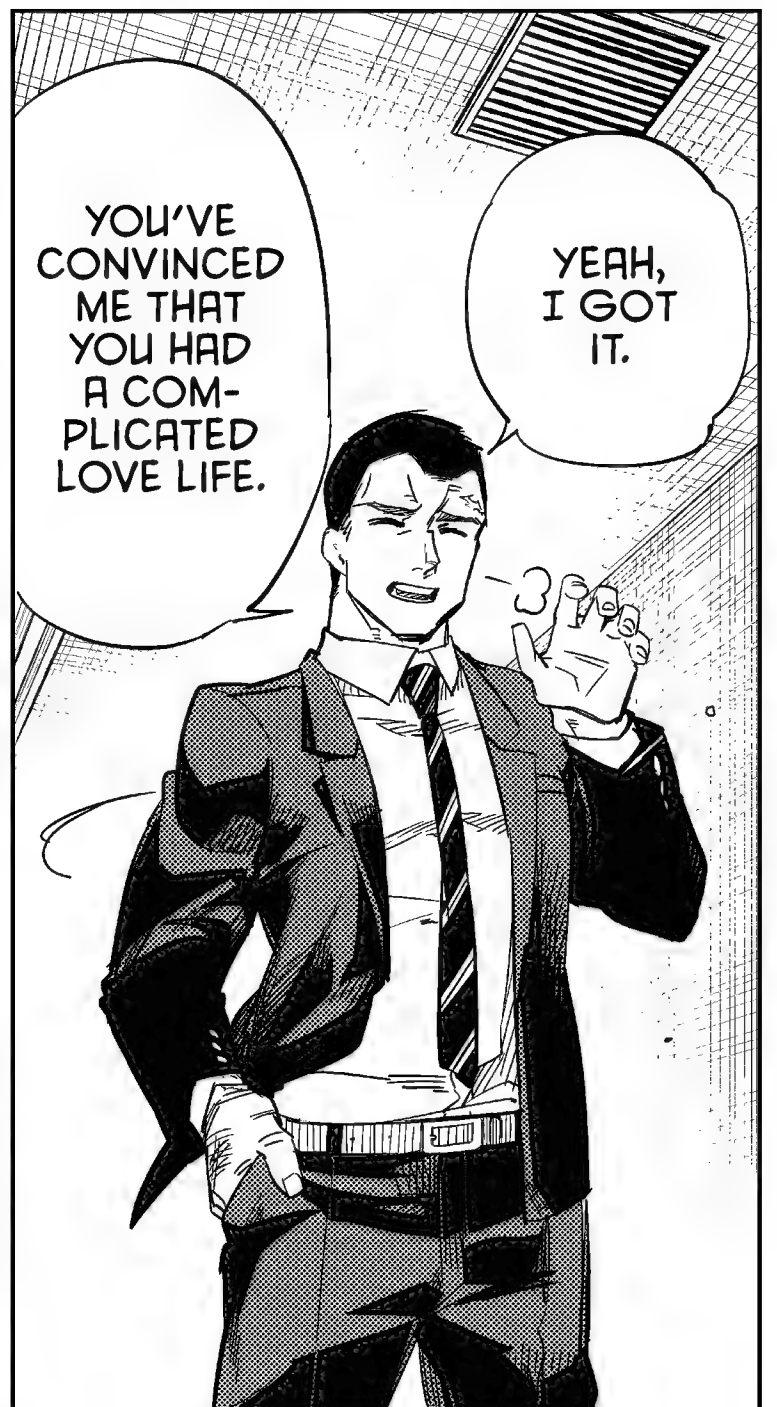


I CAN'T  
PUT YOU  
TO THE  
TROUBLE.



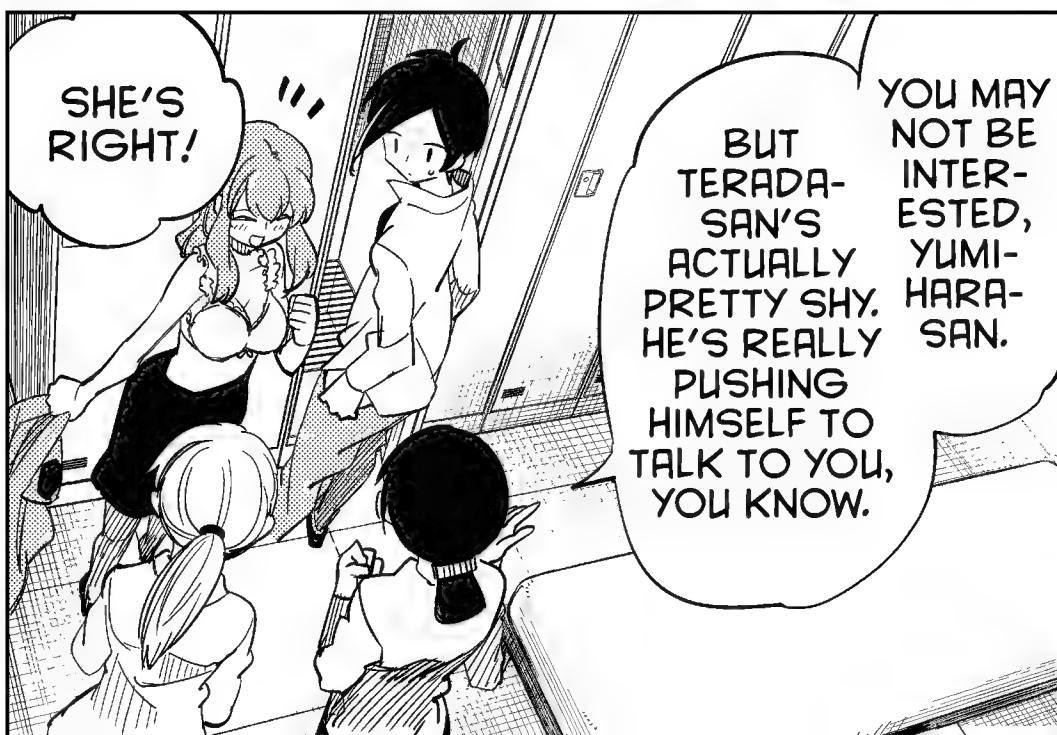
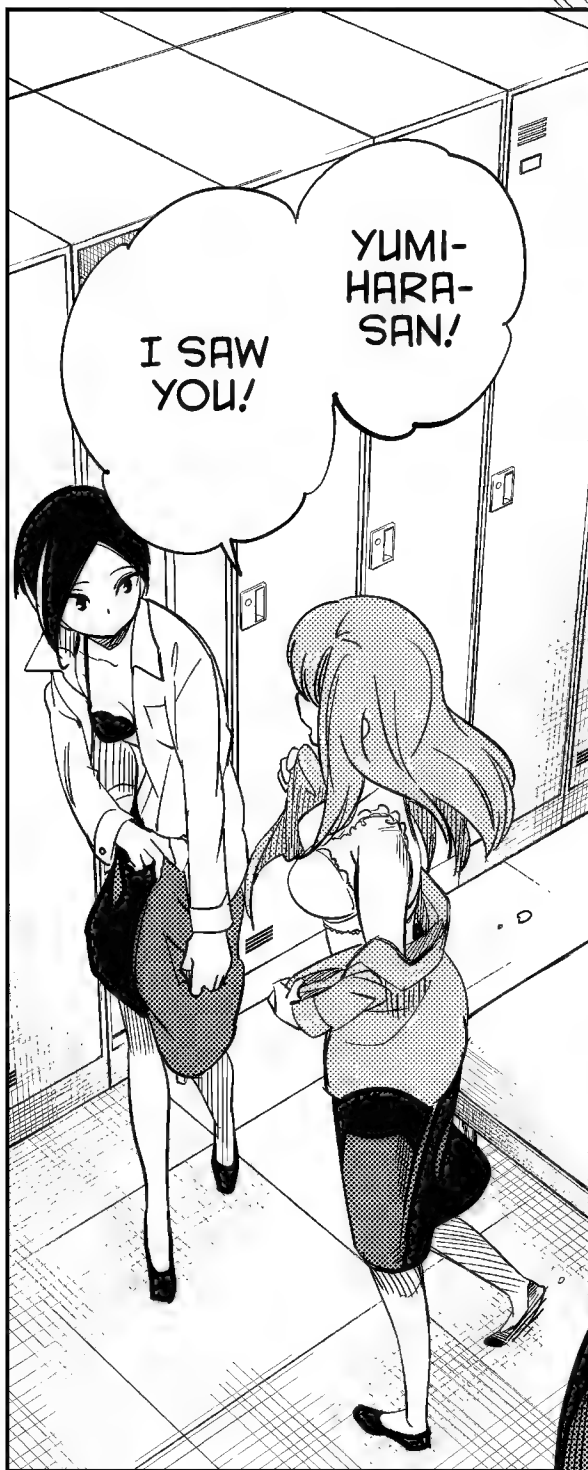
NO,  
IT JUST  
**ENDED**  
COMPLI-  
CATED...

...ER.

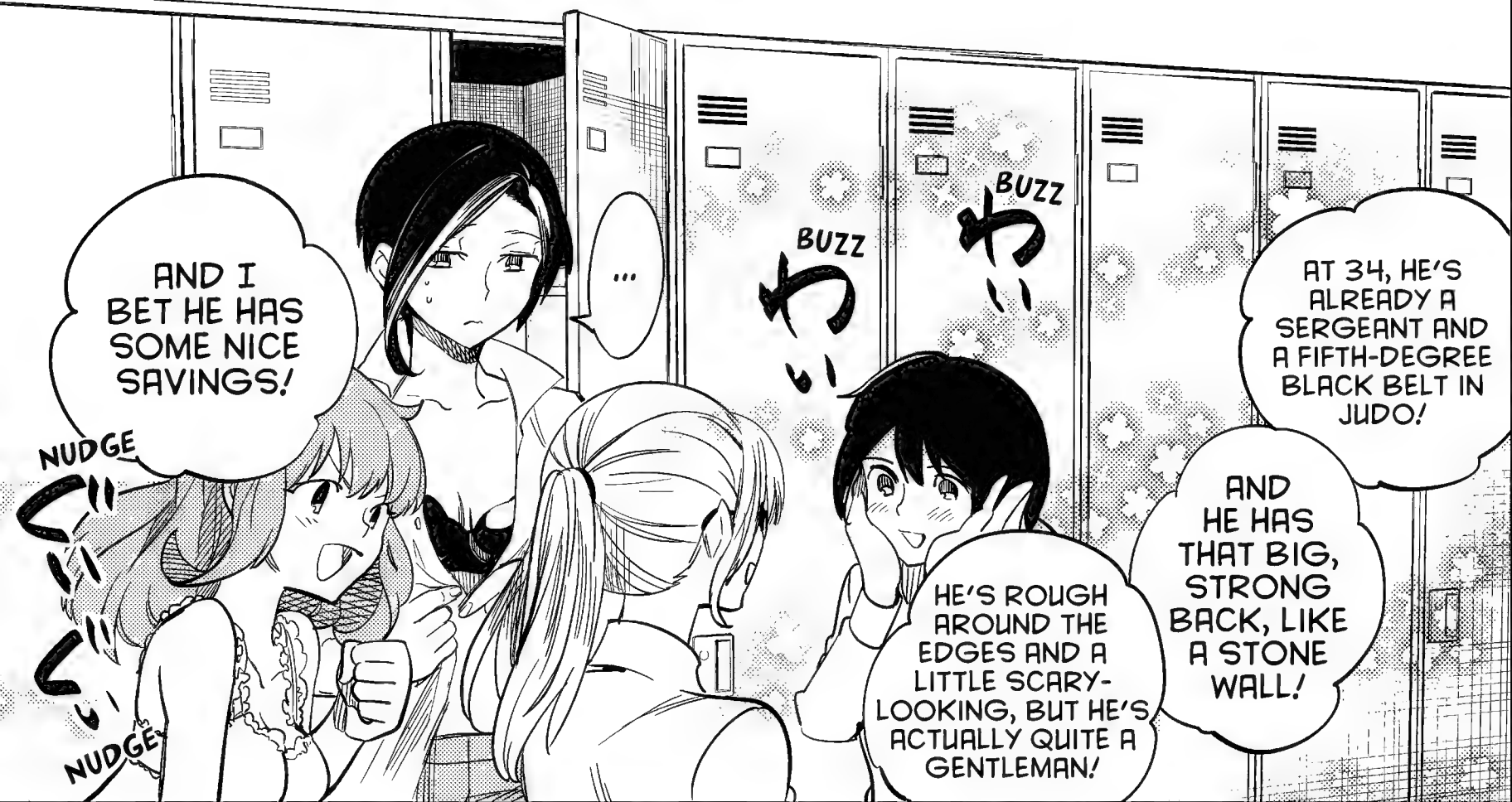


YOU'VE  
CONVINCED  
ME THAT  
YOU HAD  
A COM-  
PLICATED  
LOVE LIFE.

YEAH,  
I GOT  
IT.







AND I  
BET HE HAS  
SOME NICE  
SAVINGS!

NUDGE

NUDGE

...

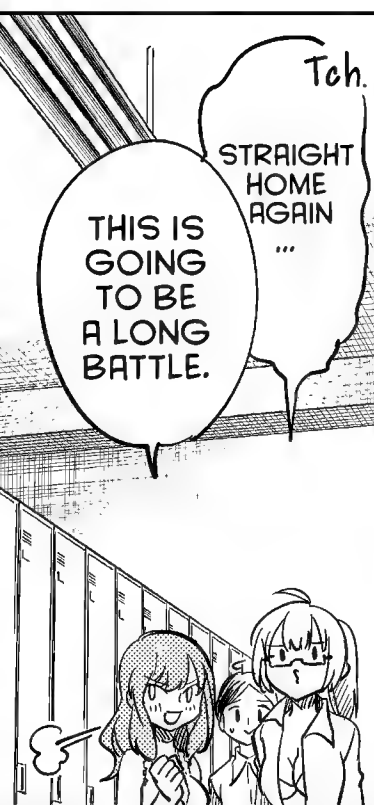
BUZZ

BUZZ

AT 34, HE'S  
ALREADY A  
SERGEANT AND  
A FIFTH-DEGREE  
BLACK BELT IN  
JUDO!

AND  
HE HAS  
THAT BIG,  
STRONG  
BACK, LIKE  
A STONE  
WALL!

HE'S ROUGH  
AROUND THE  
EDGES AND A  
LITTLE SCARY-  
LOOKING, BUT HE'S  
ACTUALLY QUITE A  
GENTLEMAN!



Tch.

STRAIGHT  
HOME  
AGAIN  
...

THIS IS  
GOING  
TO BE  
A LONG  
BATTLE.



I'LL JUST BE  
GOING NOW.  
EXCUSE ME.

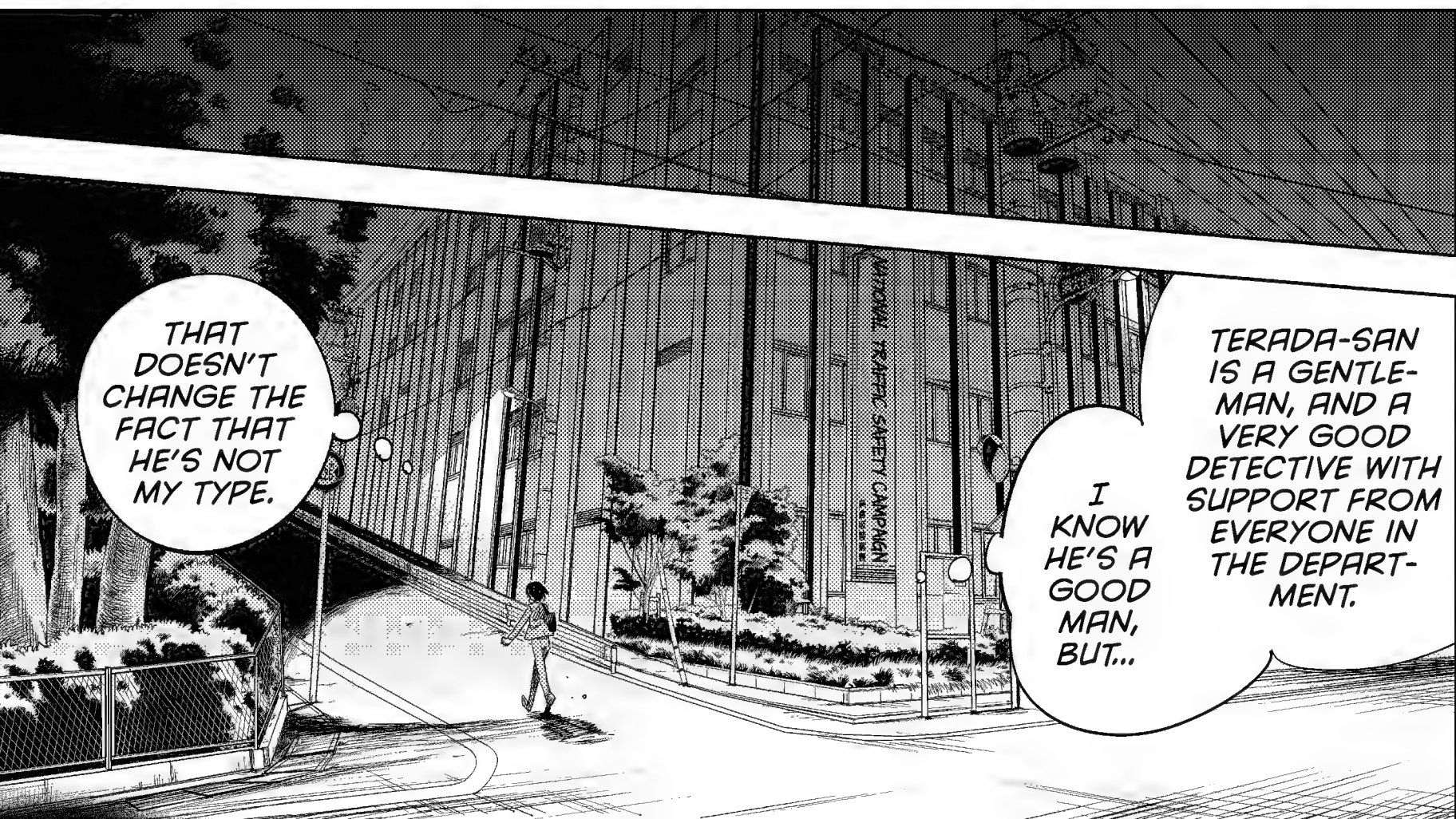
FSH

SLAM

BAM



...UM...



THAT  
DOESN'T  
CHANGE THE  
FACT THAT  
HE'S NOT  
MY TYPE.

I  
KNOW  
HE'S A  
GOOD  
MAN,  
BUT...

TERADA-SAN  
IS A GENTLE-  
MAN, AND A  
VERY GOOD  
DETECTIVE WITH  
SUPPORT FROM  
EVERYONE IN  
THE DEPART-  
MENT.





HE'S WIMPY,  
A LITTLE  
YOUNGER THAN  
I AM, A LITTLE  
SHORTER  
THAN I AM.

I'D TAKE  
KURÔ-KUN'S  
WEAK,  
SCRAWNY BACK  
OVER A STONE  
WALL ANY  
DAY...

SIMPLE...  
LIKE A  
GOAT.



...BUT I  
CAN'T.

I  
TRIED TO  
FORGET  
ABOUT  
HIM...

AS MUCH AS  
IT PAINS ME,  
I CAN'T HELP  
BUT THINK  
ABOUT HIM.



IT HAD NEVER  
OCCURRED  
TO ME THAT  
SPECTRES AND  
GOBLINS AND  
THINGS FROM  
FAIRY TALES  
WOULD BE A  
PART OF MY  
REAL LIFE.

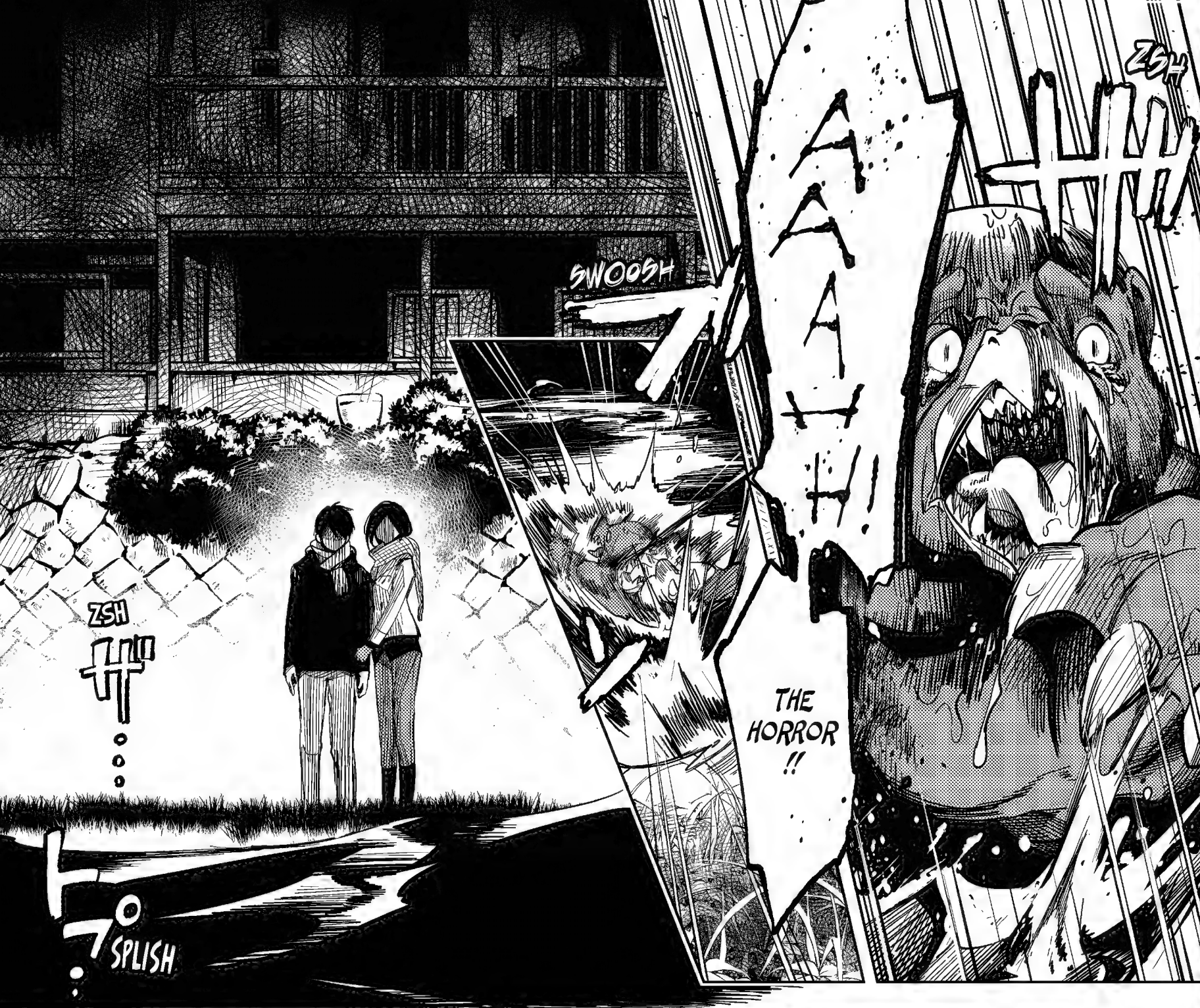












...KURÔ...  
KUN...?

OR THAT  
ONE DAY,  
I WOULD  
SINCERELY  
WONDER...

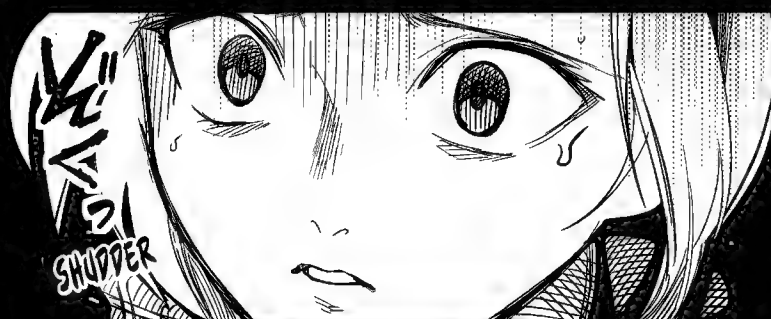
HOW COULD  
I HAVE  
IMAGINED  
THAT MY  
FIANCÉ  
WAS A  
MONSTER,



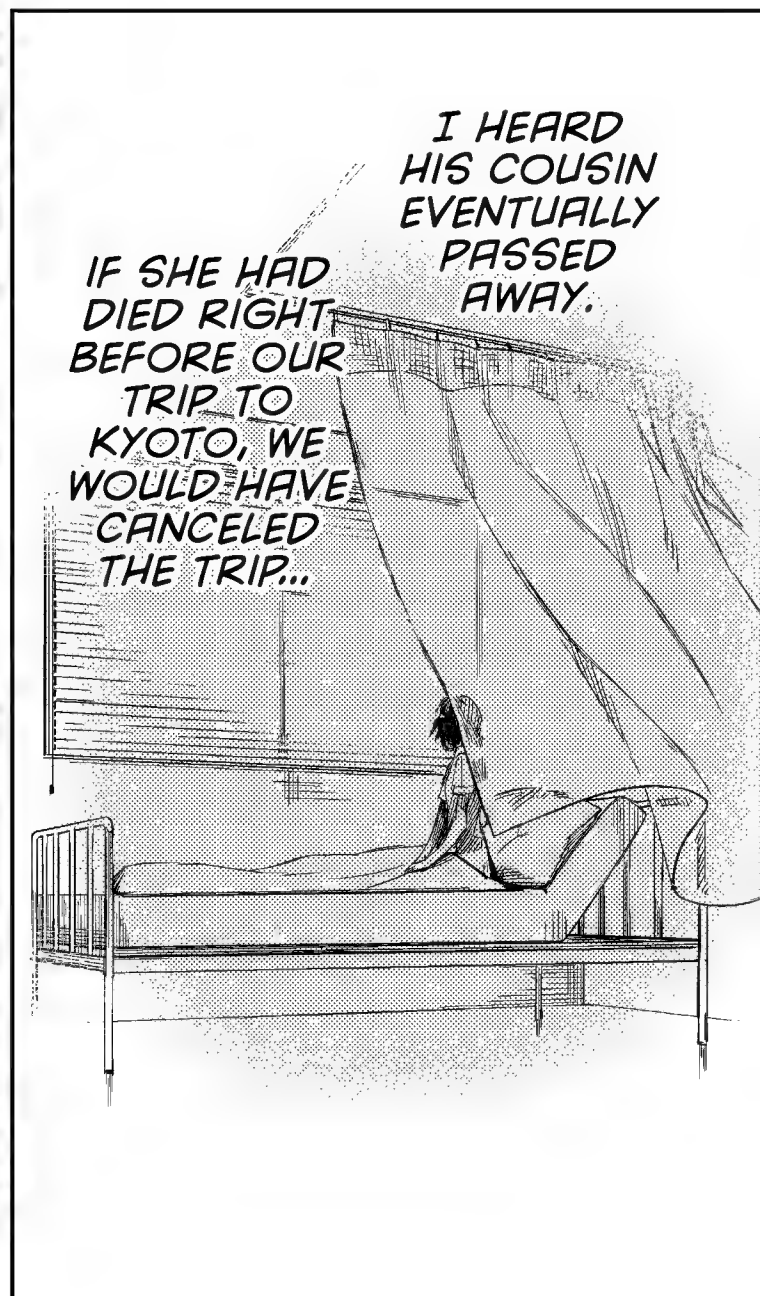
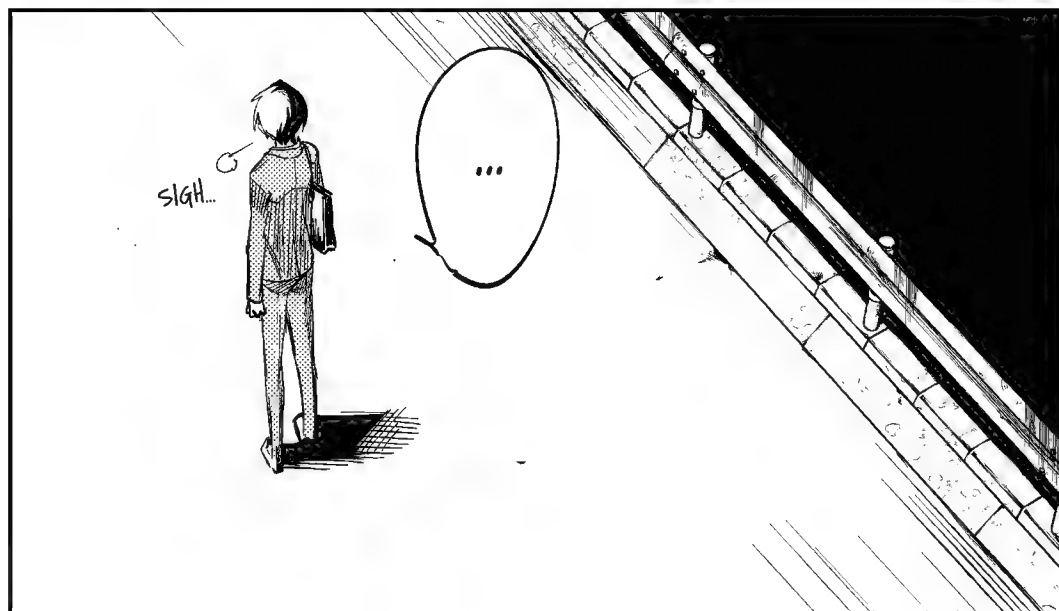
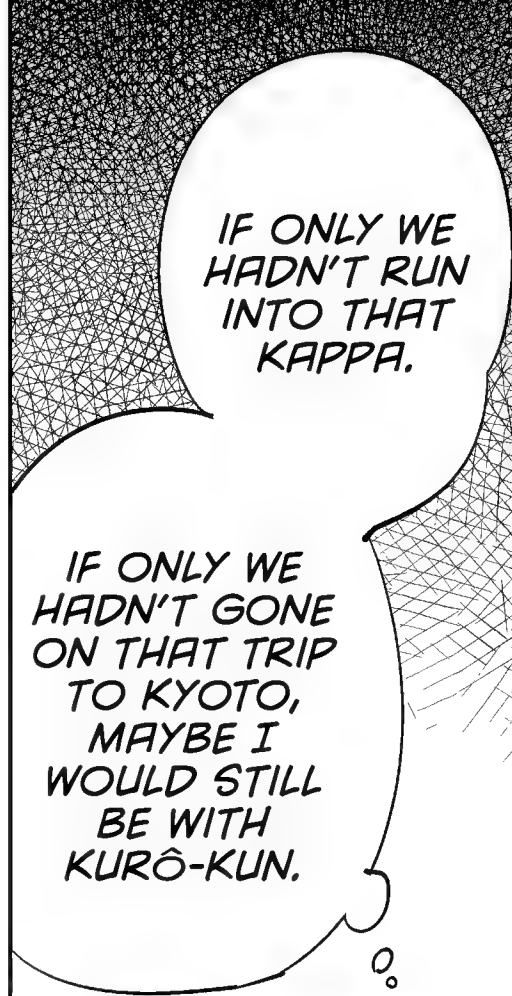
... IF I  
COULD  
GO ON  
WITH HIM.



SAKI-  
SAN.



SHUDDER







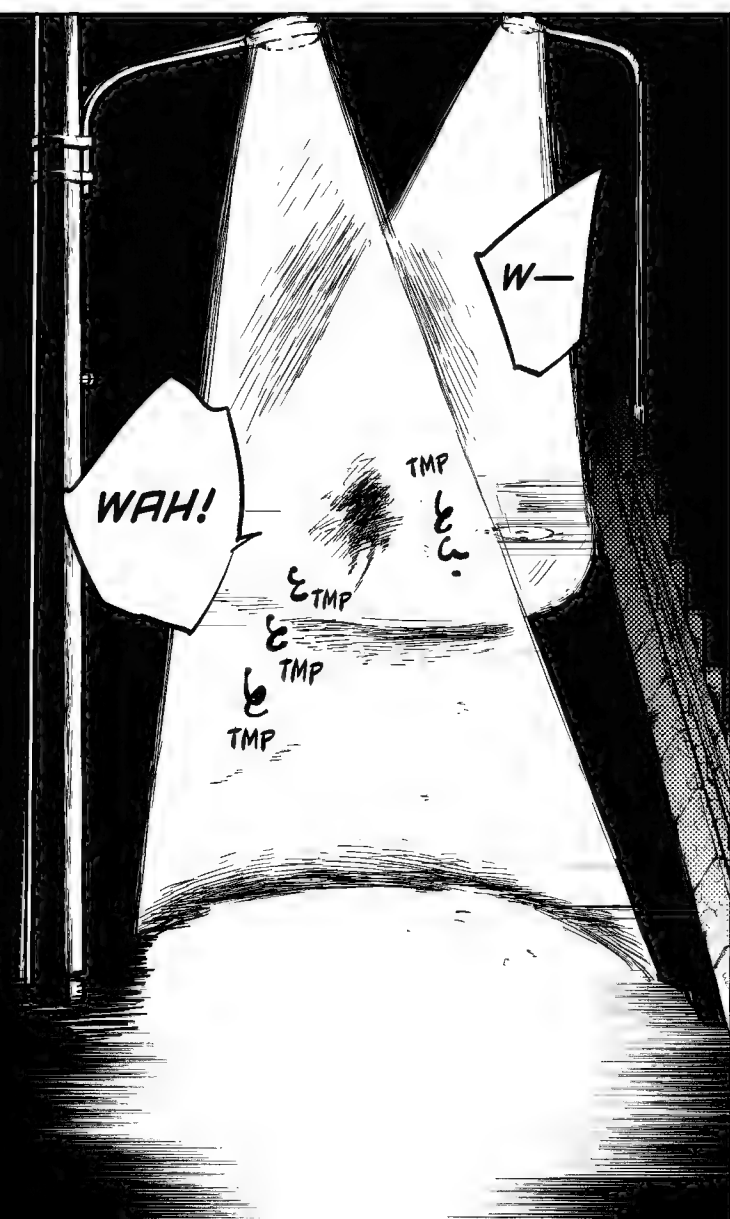
I HAVE TO  
MAKE SURE  
HE DOESN'T  
GET IN  
TOO DEEP  
WITH THE  
STEEL LADY  
NANASE  
CASE.

I WOULD  
HATE TO SEE  
SOMEONE  
CLOSE TO  
ME GET AS  
WRAPPED UP  
IN THIS AS  
I DID.



ANYWAY  
...

I'D FEEL  
BAD  
LEAVING  
TERADA-  
SAN TO  
HIS OWN  
DEVICES.



WAH!

W—

TMP

εTMP

εTMP

εTMP



SHUDDER

εε  
<??  
...

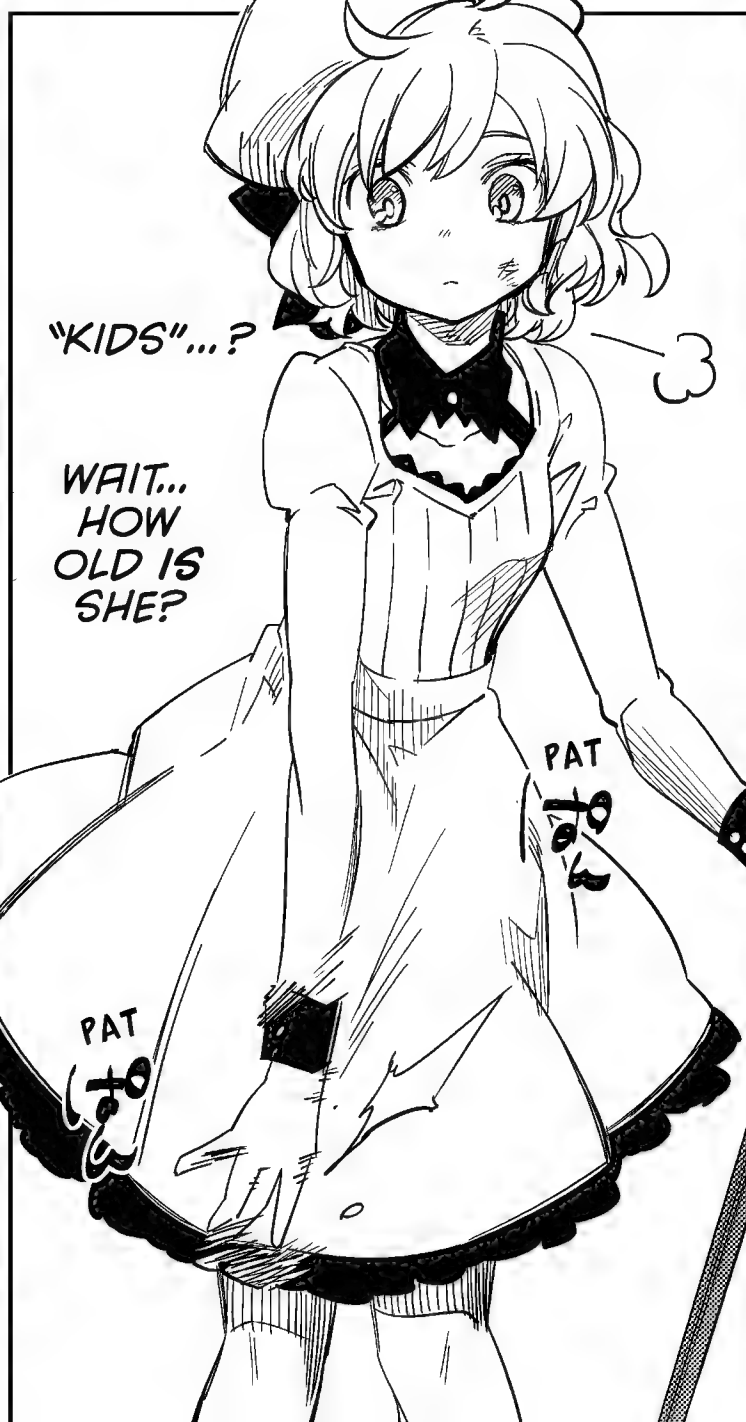


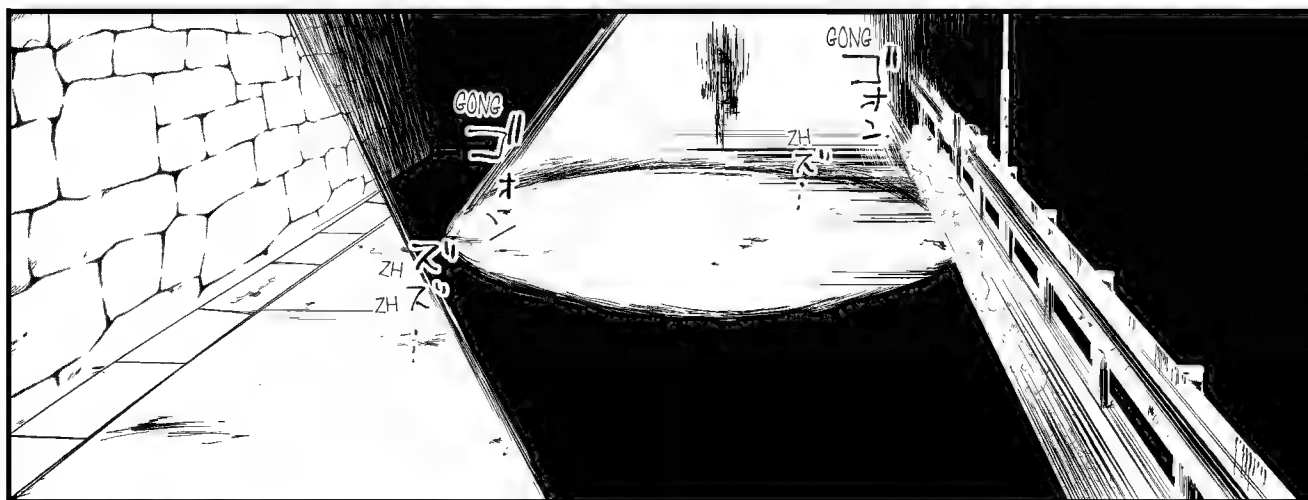
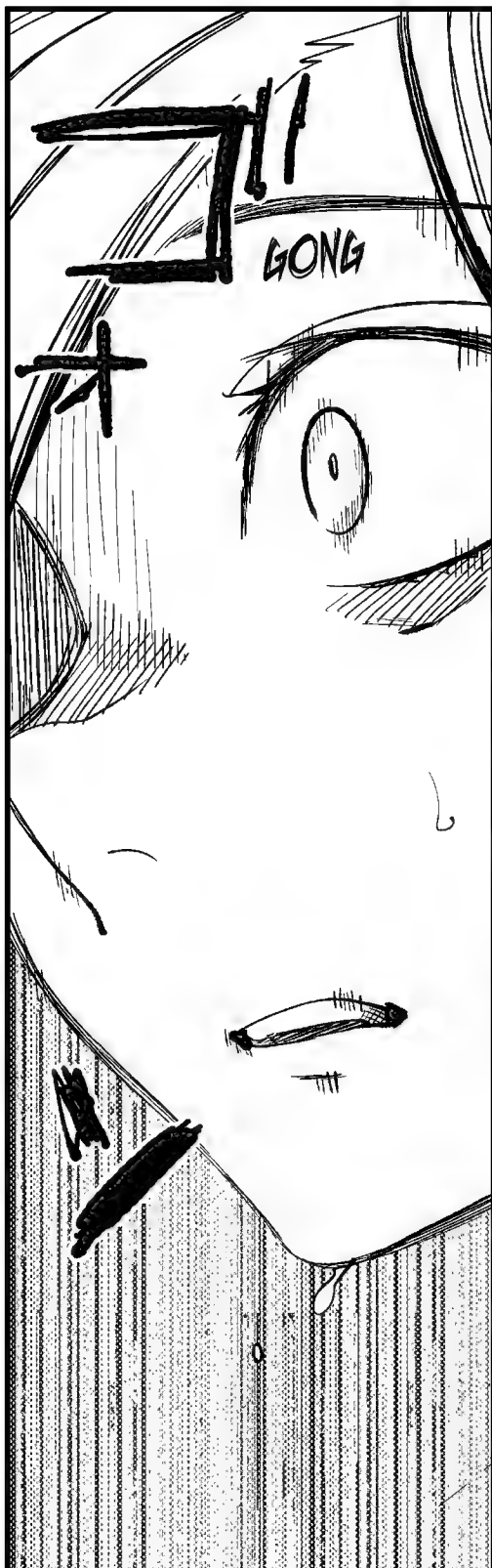
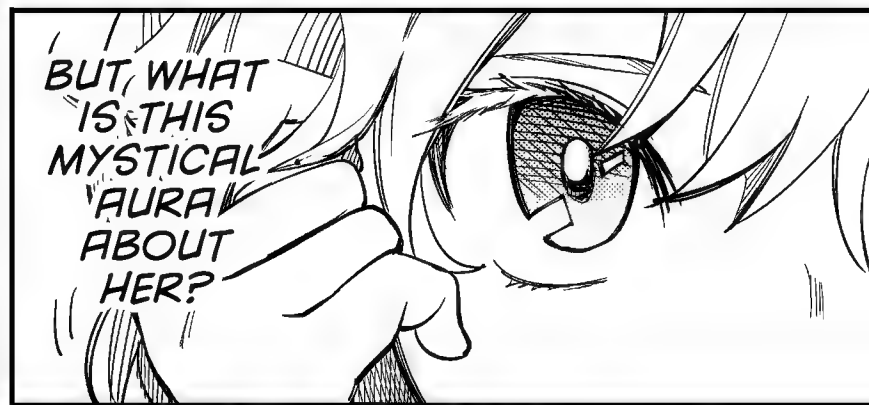
EVEN  
THIS HILL  
MAKES ME  
NERVOUS,  
AND I  
CLIMB IT  
EVERY  
DAY.





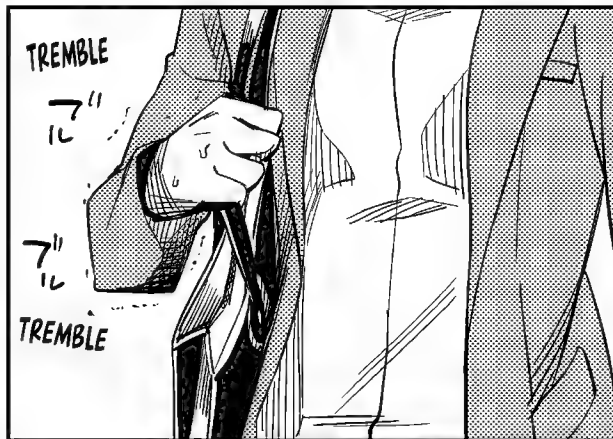
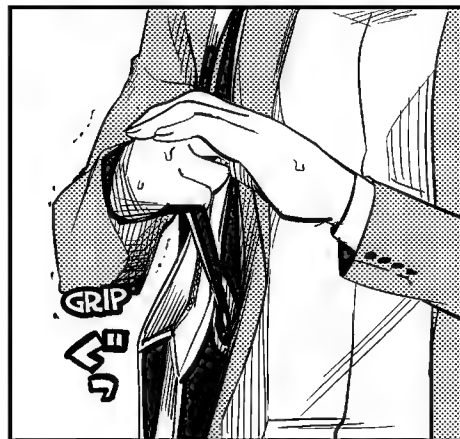














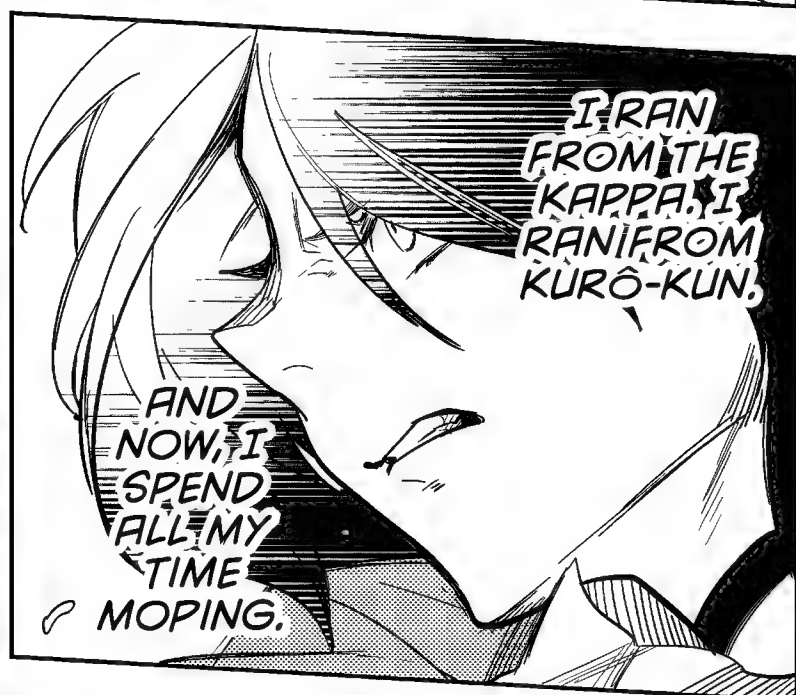


I'M  
GETTING  
PRETTY  
TIRED OF  
THESE  
THINGS  
MESSING  
WITH MY LIFE.



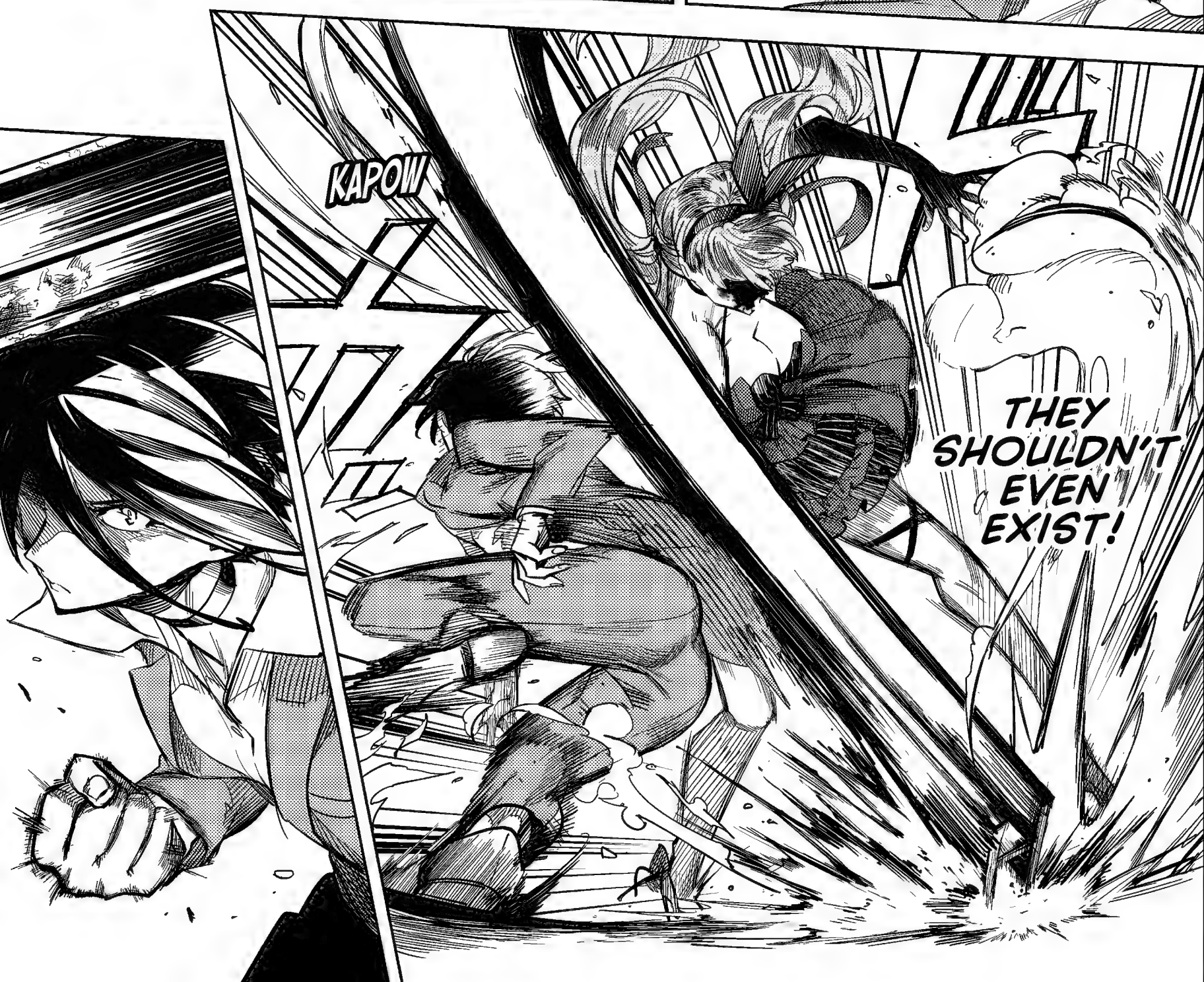
Hey!

DASH



I RAN  
FROM THE  
KAPPA. I  
RAN FROM  
KURÔ-KUN.

AND  
NOW, I  
SPEND  
ALL MY  
TIME  
MOPING.



KAPOW!

THEY  
SHOULDN'T  
EVEN  
EXIST!









SEE?  
I TOLD  
YOU TO  
RUN!

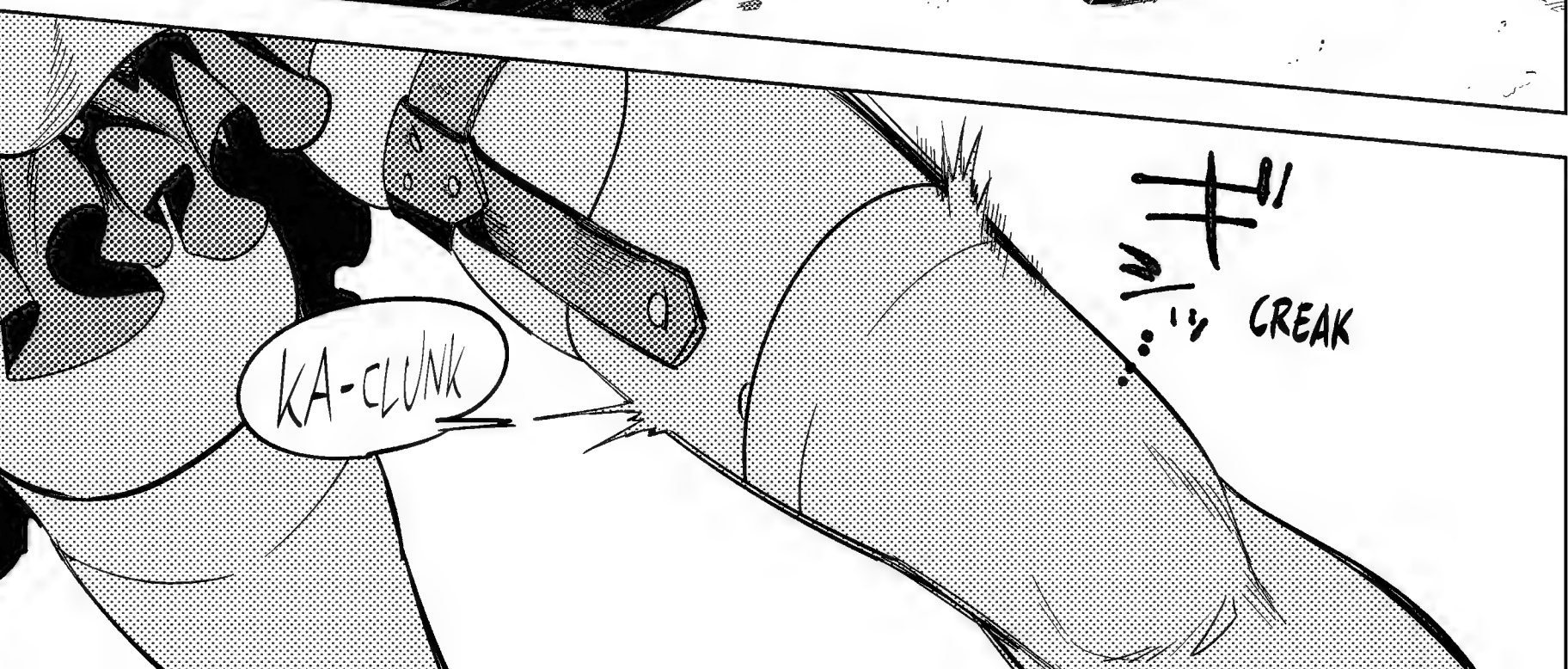


THIS  
IS  
INSANE.



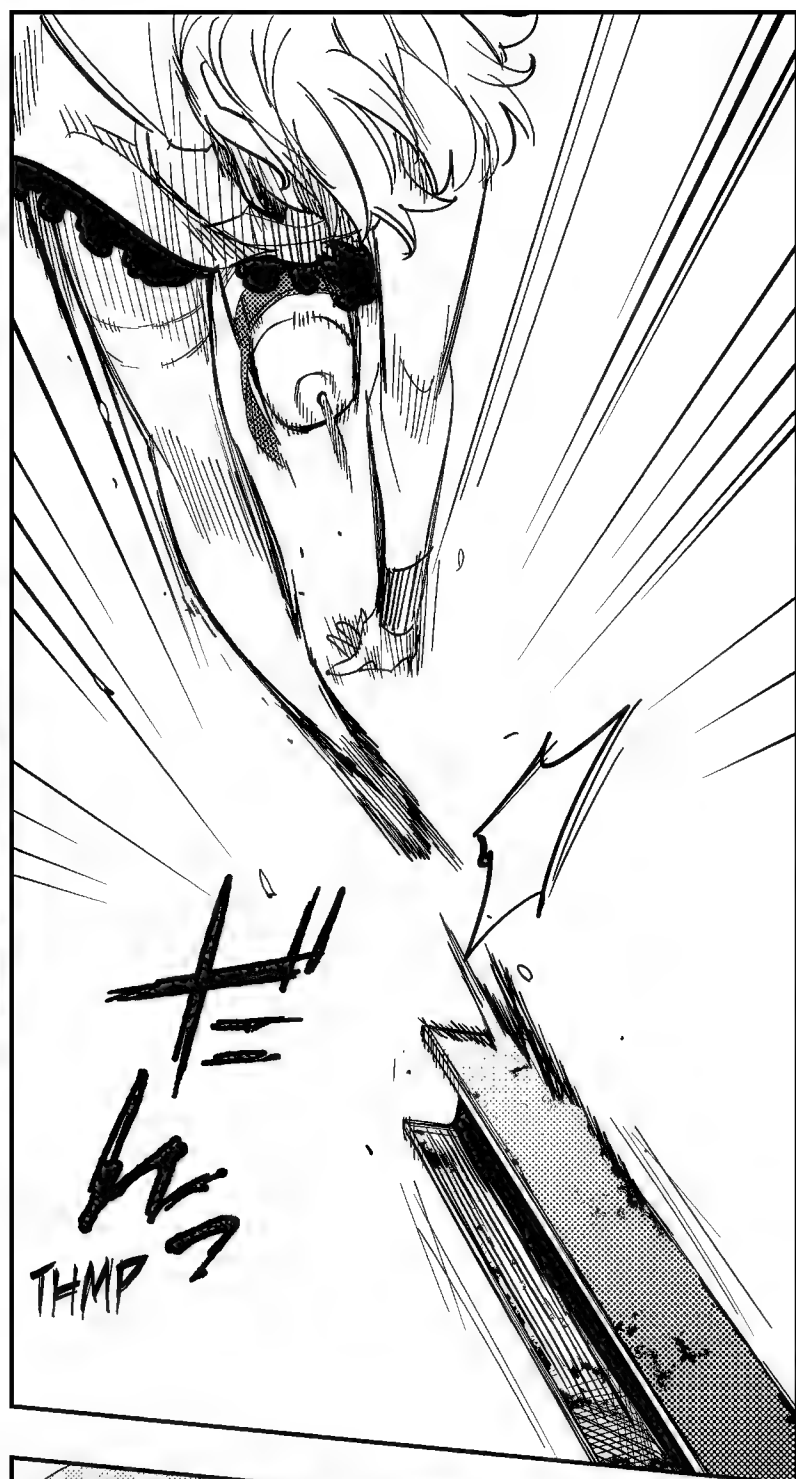






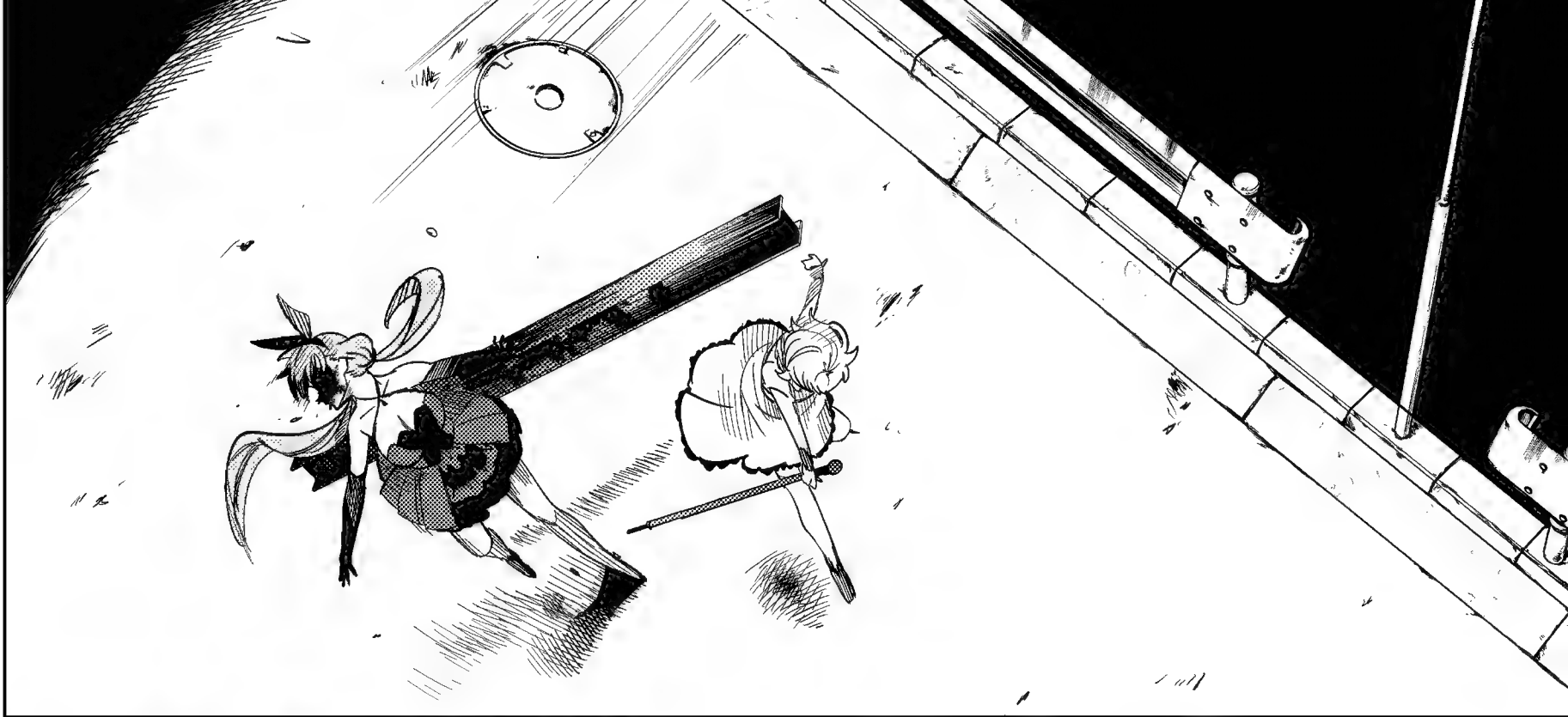




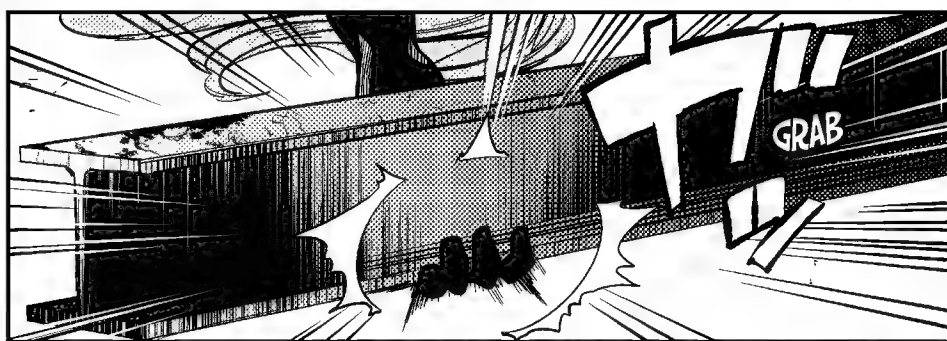
















IT  
DOESN'T  
MAKE  
ANY  
SENSE.



...SO  
SHE  
LEFT.

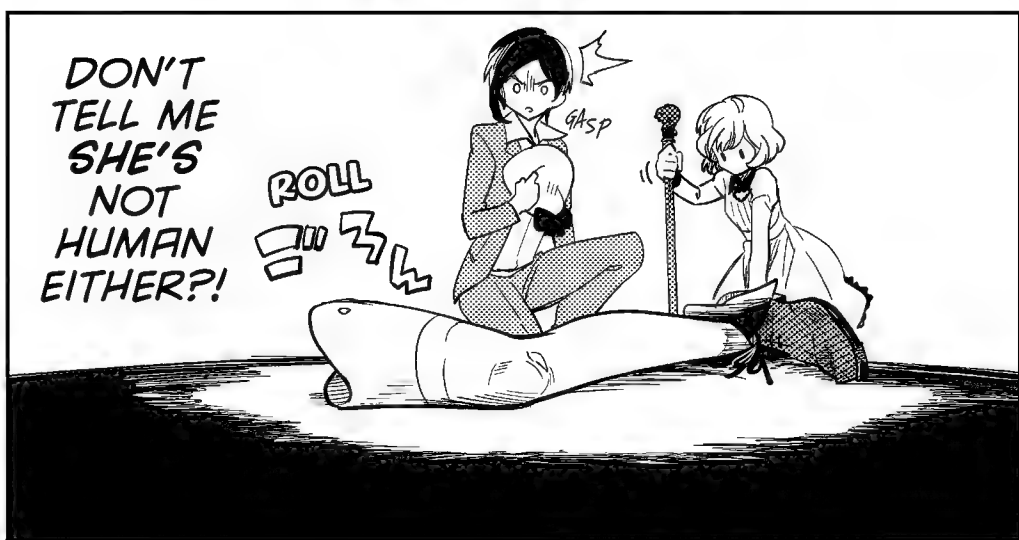
BUT I  
DON'T  
THINK I  
CAN DEFEAT  
HER WITH  
FORCE...

MUTTER

MUTTER



SHE CAN  
TACKLE A  
SPIRIT?  
JUST  
WHO IS  
THIS  
GIRL?



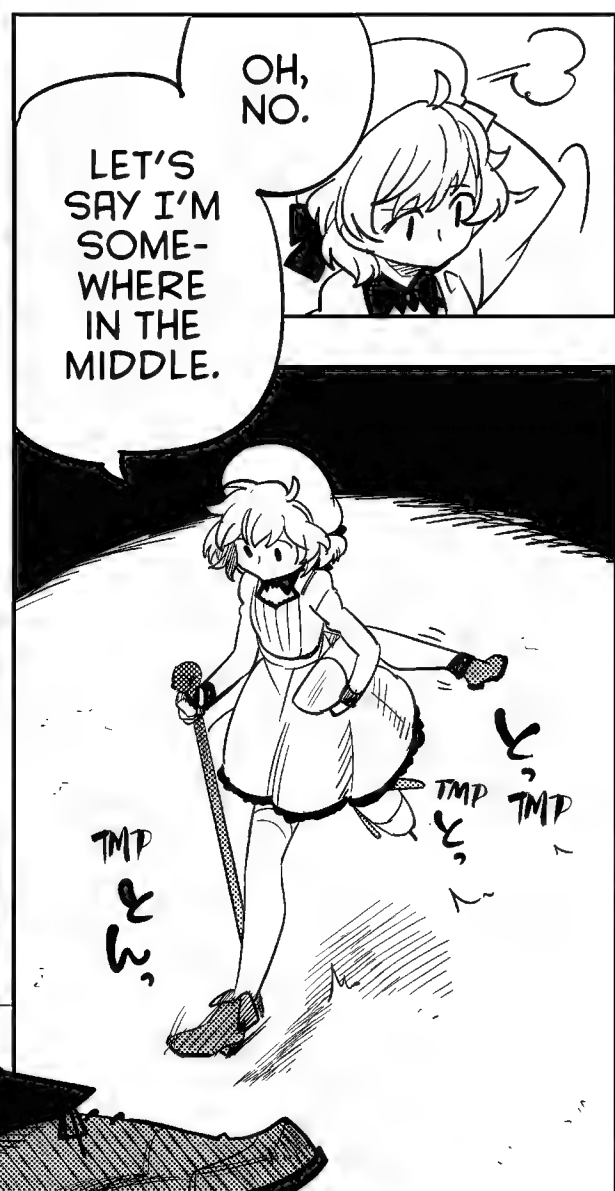
DON'T  
TELL ME  
SHE'S  
NOT  
HUMAN  
EITHER?!

ROLL

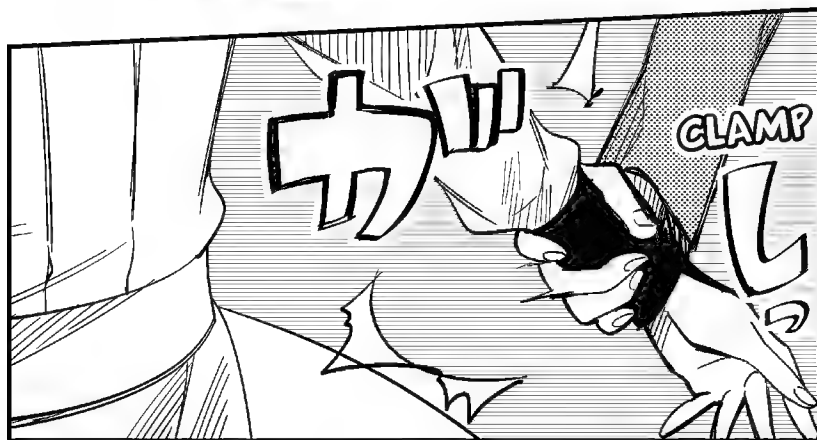
GASP

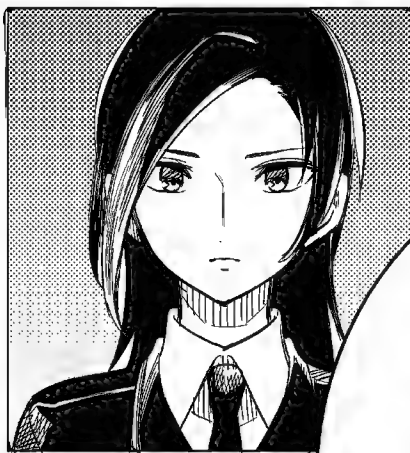


FZ#









Police Officer  
Traffic Division

Yumihara, Saki

AND  
I WON'T  
CONTACT  
YOUR  
RELATIVES  
WITHOUT  
GOOD  
REASON.

RELAX.  
I WON'T  
REPORT  
THIS.

YOUR LEG  
MAY BE FINE,  
BUT YOU'RE  
COVERED IN  
SCRAPES AND  
BRUISES. I'LL  
BANDAGE  
YOU UP.



TRAFFIC  
OFFICER  
SAKI  
YUMIHARA  
...?

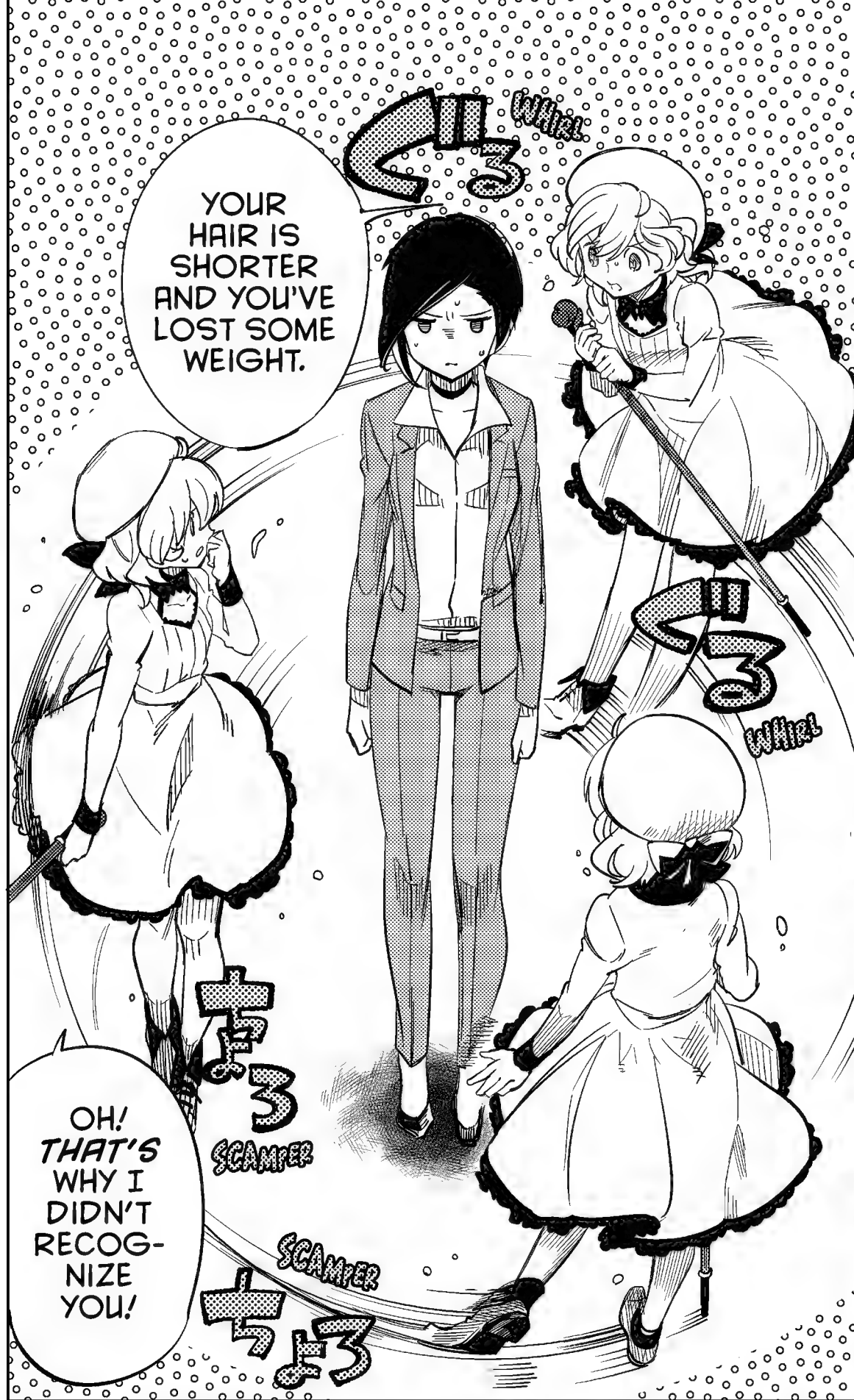
THE POLICE ALREADY  
HAVE REPORTS OF  
CASES WE BELIEVE  
TO BE CONNECTED  
TO THE STEEL LADY.  
I CAN'T JUST  
IGNORE THIS.

STARE  
"



ARE YOU...  
SAKI-SAN?





YOUR  
HAIR IS  
SHORTER  
AND YOU'VE  
LOST SOME  
WEIGHT.

OH!  
THAT'S  
WHY I  
DIDN'T  
RECOG-  
NIZE  
YOU!



UMM.

I'M NOT  
SURE  
WHAT  
YOU  
MEAN BY  
THAT...

I AM A  
SAKI-SAN,  
but...



I MEAN, I  
WOULDN'T  
LET YOU  
DIE, BUT...

OH!

NO,  
UM.

IF I'D  
KNOWN  
YOU WERE  
SAKI-SAN, I  
WOULDN'T  
HAVE  
HELPED!

うん...  
うん...

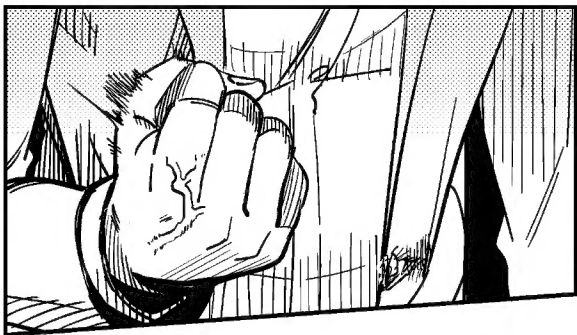






CURRENT  
GIRL-  
FRIEND.

KURŌ  
SAKURA-  
GAWA-  
SENPAI'S









As for the content of this particular volume, while the plot and dialogue are pretty much straight from the novel, there are scenes, expressions, and ideas everywhere that are unique to the manga, and it's turning into something that will have different highlights from the novel, giving readers a different impression. In fact, an acquaintance of mine read Chapter 1 and said, "It's so faithful to the novel, but so much more refreshing."

Even the same scene with the same lines will have differences; maybe it's because the humanity of the writer shows through. It's scary.

Incidentally, the title makes reference to detective work, but there is nothing resembling a mystery story in this book; instead, we have yōkai and ghosts, and on top of that, it focuses on people with powers that aren't really explained. So if anyone picked it up hoping for a mystery manga, and you're getting mad and thinking, "Are you going to have any mystery in this at all?!", then direct all your complaints to me, because it's faithful to the original.

The story should become a little more of a "mystery" as it goes on (there are police officers in it, after all). When the novel was published, I got reviews from both camps, claiming that it was a mystery novel and that it wasn't one. In regards to that, I hide behind my excuse of, "It's made of the same substance as mystery."

That's really not very refreshing, is it?

Well, I hope you'll read the next volume.

Kyo Shirodaira

I am Kyo Shirodaira, the one credited on the cover and frontispiece as writing the "story." This is volume one. To those of you who know my name and those who don't, thank you for picking up this book.

Now, this manga, known as *In/Spectre*, is the graphic novel version of the story I wrote as a novel in 2011, and published as *Invented Inference: Steel Lady Nanase*. At the time that I was writing the novel, I had no idea that it would become a manga.

And this time, I didn't write any new scenarios or tweak the continuity like I often do with manga of my work; I just gave Chashiba Katase-sensei the book and said, "Don't worry about my feelings at all, just draw whatever you think is interesting in whatever way you think it's interesting. If possible, I'd prefer you don't make it too serious." It's a pretty different relationship than what I usually have with a manga artist.

Because Chapter 1 was the first one, and we were just starting out, I did make some comments before it was drawn about some lines of dialogue and the story details, but other than that, I had no idea what was going on with it until it was published in the magazine. I just sat back and thought to myself, "Wow, I'm not doing anything, but this is really turning into a good manga. There are more good scenes than there were before." Part of my lack of involvement comes from a fear that, since the story already exists as a published novel, if I were to get too involved, the manga would be constrained by the novel. I felt it would be a better manga if I left it to someone else's interpretation and story sense.

